

AN ALPHABET OF KID LIT



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ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS

The Project Gutenberg eBook, *The Golden Age*, by Kenneth Grahame

‘LET’S pretend,’ suggested Harold, ‘that we’re Cavaliers and Roundheads; and you be a Roundhead!’

‘O bother,’ I replied drowsily, ‘we pretended that yesterday; and it’s not my turn to be a Roundhead, anyhow.’ The fact is, I was lazy, and the call to arms fell on indifferent ears. We three younger ones were stretched at length in the orchard. The sun was hot, the season merry June, and never (I thought) had there been such wealth and riot of buttercups throughout the lush grass. Green-and-gold was the dominant key that day. Instead of active ‘pretence’ with its shouts and its perspiration, how much better—I held—to lie at ease and pretend to one’s self, in green and golden fancies, slipping the husk and passing, a careless loungeur, through a sleepy imaginary world all gold and green! But the persistent Harold was not to be fobbed off.

‘Well then,’ he began afresh, ‘let’s pretend we’re Knights of the Round Table; and (with a rush) I’ll be Lancelot!’

‘I won’t play unless I’m Lancelot,’ I said. I didn’t mean it really, but the game of Knights always began with this particular contest.

‘O please,’ implored Harold. ‘You know when Edward’s here I never get a chance of being Lancelot. I haven’t been Lancelot for weeks!’

Then I yielded gracefully. ‘All right,’ I said. ‘I’ll be Tristram.’

‘O, but you can’t,’ cried Harold again. ‘Charlotte has always been Tristram. She won’t play unless she’s allowed to be Tristram! Be somebody else this time.’

Charlotte said nothing, but breathed hard, looking straight before her. The peerless hunter and harper was her special hero of romance, and rather than see the part in less appreciative hands, she would have

gone back in tears to the stuffy schoolroom.

‘I don’t care,’ I said: ‘I’ll be anything. I’ll be Sir Kay. Come on!’

Then once more in this country’s story the mail-clad knights paced through the greenwood shaw, questing adventure, redressing wrong; and bandits, five to one, broke and fled discomfited to their caves. Once more were damsels rescued, dragons disembowelled, and giants, in every corner of the orchard, deprived of their already superfluous number of heads; while Palomides the Saracen waited for us by the well, and Sir Breuse Saunce Pit  vanished in craven flight before the skilled spear that was his terror and his bane. Once more the lists were dight in Camelot, and all was gay with shimmer of silk and gold; the earth shook with thunder of hooves, ash-staves flew in splinters, and the firmament rang to the clash of sword on helm. The varying fortune of the day swung doubtful—now on this side, now on that; till at last Lancelot, grim and great, thrusting through the press, unhorsed Sir Tristram (an easy task), and bestrode her, threatening doom; while the Cornish knight, forgetting hard-won fame of old, cried piteously, ‘You’re hurting me, I tell you! and you’re tearing my frock!’ Then it happened that Sir Kay, hurtling to the rescue, stopped short in his stride, catching sight suddenly, through apple-boughs, of a gleam of scarlet afar off; while the confused tramp of many horses, mingled with talk and laughter, was borne to the ears of his fellow-champions and himself.

‘What is it?’ inquired Tristram, sitting up and shaking out her curls; while Lancelot forsook the clanging lists and trotted nimbly to the boundary-hedge.

I stood spell-bound for a moment longer, and then, with a cry of ‘Soldiers!’ I was off to the hedge, Sir Tristram picking herself up and scurrying after us.

Down the road they came, two and two, at an easy walk; scarlet flamed in the eye, bits jingled and saddles squeaked delightfully; while the men, in a halo of dust, smoked their short clays like the heroes they were. In a swirl of intoxicating glory the troop clinked and clattered by, while we shouted and waved, jumping up and down, and the big jolly horsemen acknowledged the salute with easy condescension. The moment

they were past we were through the hedge and after them. Soldiers were not the common stuff of everyday life. There had been nothing like this since the winter before last, when on a certain afternoon—bare of leaf and monochromatic in its hue of sodden fallow and frost-nipt copse—suddenly the hounds had burst through the fence with their mellow cry, and all the paddock was for the minute reverberant of thudding hoof and dotted with glancing red. But this was better, since it could only mean that blows and bloodshed were in the air.

‘Is there going to be a battle?’ panted Harold, hardly able to keep up for excitement.

‘Of course there is,’ I replied. ‘We’re just in time. Come on!’

Perhaps I ought to have known better; and yet——? The pigs and poultry, with whom we chiefly consorted, could instruct us little concerning the peace that lapped in these latter days our seagirt realm. In the schoolroom we were just now dallying with the Wars of the Roses; and did not legends of the country-side inform us how cavaliers had once galloped up and down these very lanes from their quarters in the village? Here, now, were soldiers unmistakable; and if their business was not fighting, what was it? Sniffing the joy of battle, we followed hard in their tracks.

‘Won’t Edward be sorry,’ puffed Harold, ‘that he’s begun that beastly Latin?’

It did, indeed, seem hard. Edward, the most martial spirit of us all, was drearily conjugating *_amo_* (of all verbs!) between four walls, while Selina, who ever thrilled ecstatic to a red coat, was struggling with the uncouth German tongue. ‘Age,’ I reflected, ‘carries its penalties.’

It was a grievous disappointment to us that the troop passed through the village unmolested. Every cottage, I pointed out to my companions, ought to have been loopholed, and strongly held. But no opposition was offered to the soldiers who, indeed, conducted themselves with a recklessness and a want of precaution that seemed simply criminal.

At the last cottage a transitory gleam of common sense flickered across me, and, turning on Charlotte, I sternly ordered her back. The small maiden, docile but exceedingly dolorous, dragged reluctant feet homewards, heavy at heart that she was to behold no stout fellows slain that day; but Harold and I held steadily on, expecting every instant to see the environing hedges crackle and spit forth the leaden death.

‘Will they be Indians?’ asked my brother (meaning the enemy) ‘or Roundheads, or what?’

I reflected. Harold always required direct straightforward answers—not faltering suppositions.

‘They won’t be Indians,’ I replied at last; ‘nor yet Roundheads. There haven’t been any Roundheads seen about here for a long time. They’ll be Frenchmen.’

Harold’s face fell. ‘All right,’ he said: ‘Frenchmen’ll do; but I did hope they’d be Indians.’

‘If they were going to be Indians,’ I explained, ‘I—I don’t think I’d go on. Because when Indians take you prisoner they scalp you first, and then burn you at the stake. But Frenchmen don’t do that sort of thing.’

‘Are you quite sure?’ asked Harold doubtfully.

‘Quite,’ I replied. ‘Frenchmen only shut you up in a thing called the Bastille; and then you get a file sent in to you in a loaf of bread, and saw the bars through, and slide down a rope, and they all fire at you—but they don’t hit you—and you run down to the seashore as hard as you can, and swim off to a British frigate, and there you are!’

Harold brightened up again. The programme was rather attractive. ‘If they try to take us prisoner,’ he said, ‘we—we won’t run, will we?’

Meanwhile, the craven foe was a long time showing himself; and we were reaching strange outland country, uncivilised, wherein lions might be expected to prowl at nightfall. I had a stitch in my side, and both

Harold's stockings had come down. Just as I was beginning to have gloomy doubts of the proverbial courage of Frenchmen, the officer called out something, the men closed up, and, breaking into a trot, the troops—already far ahead—vanished out of our sight. With a sinking at the heart, I began to suspect we had been fooled.

‘Are they charging?’ cried Harold, very weary, but rallying gamely.

‘I think not,’ I replied doubtfully. ‘When there's going to be a charge, the officer always makes a speech, and then they draw their swords and the trumpets blow, and—but let's try a short cut. We may catch them up yet.’

So we struck across the fields and into another road, and pounded down that, and then over more fields, panting, down-hearted, yet hoping for the best. The sun went in, and a thin drizzle began to fall; we were muddy, breathless, almost dead-beat; but we blundered on, till at last we struck a road more brutally, more callously unfamiliar than any road I ever looked upon. Not a hint nor a sign of friendly direction or assistance on the dogged white face of it! There was no longer any disguising it: we were hopelessly lost. The small rain continued steadily, the evening began to come on. Really there are moments when a fellow is justified in crying; and I would have cried too, if Harold had not been there. That right-minded child regarded an elder brother as a veritable god; and I could see that he felt himself as secure as if a whole Brigade of Guards had hedged him round with protecting bayonets. But I dreaded sore lest he should begin again with his questions.

As I gazed in dumb appeal on the face of unresponsive nature, the sound of nearing wheels sent a pulse of hope through my being: increasing to rapture as I recognised in the approaching vehicle the familiar carriage of the old doctor. If ever a god emerged from a machine, it was when this heaven-sent friend, recognising us, stopped and jumped out with a cheery hail. Harold rushed up to him at once. ‘Have you been there?’ he cried. ‘Was it a jolly fight? who beat? were there many people killed?’

The doctor appeared puzzled. I briefly explained the situation.

‘I see,’ said the doctor, looking grave and twisting his face this way and that. ‘Well, the fact is, there isn’t going to be any battle to-day. It’s been put off, on account of the change in the weather. You will have due notice of the renewal of hostilities. And now you’d better jump in and I’ll drive you home. You’ve been running a fine rig! Why, you might have both been taken and shot as spies!’

This special danger had never even occurred to us. The thrill of it accentuated the cosy homelike feeling of the cushions we nestled into as we rolled homewards. The doctor beguiled the journey with blood-curdling narratives of personal adventure in the tented field, he having followed the profession of arms (so it seemed) in every quarter of the globe. Time, the destroyer of all things beautiful, subsequently revealed the baselessness of these legends; but what of that? There are higher things than truth; and we were almost reconciled, by the time we were put down at our gate, to the fact that the battle had been postponed.



THE BORAH OF BYAMEE

Project Gutenberg's *Australian Legendary Tales*, by K. Langloh Parker

Word had been passed from tribe to tribe, telling, how that the season was good, there must be a great gathering of the tribes. And the place fixed for the gathering was Googoorewon. The old men whispered that it should be the occasion for a borah, but this the women must not know. Old Byamee, who was a great Wirreenun, said he would take his two sons, Ghindahindahmoe and Boomahoomahnowee, to the gathering of the tribes, for the time had come when they should be made young men, that they might be free to marry wives, eat emu flesh, and learn to be warriors.

As tribe after tribe arrived at Googoorewon, each took up a position at one of the various points of the ridges, surrounding the clear open space where the corroborees were to be. The Wahn, crows, had one

point; the Dummerh, pigeons, another; the Mahthi, dogs, another, and so on; Byamee and his tribe, Byahmul the black swans tribe, Oooboan, the blue tongued lizard, and many other chiefs and their tribes, each had their camp on a different point. When all had arrived there were hundreds and hundreds assembled, and many and varied were the nightly corroborees, each tribe trying to excel the other in the fancifulness of their painted get-up, and the novelty of their newest song and dance. By day there was much hunting and feasting, by night much dancing and singing; pledges of friendship exchanged, a dillibag for a boomerang, and so on; young daughters given to old warriors, old women given to young men, unborn girls promised to old men, babies in arms promised to grown men; many and diverse were the compacts entered into, and always were the Wirreenun, or doctors of the tribes consulted.

After some days the Wirreenun told the men of the tribes that they were going to hold a borah. But on no account must the innerh, or women, know. Day by day they must all go forth as if to hunt and then prepare in secret the borah ground. Out went the man each day. They cleared a very large circle quite clear, then they built an earthen dam round this circle, and cleared a pathway leading into the thick bush from the circle, and built a dam on either side of this pathway.

When all these preparations were finished, they had, as usual, a corroboree at night. After this had been going on for some time, one of the old Wirreenun walked right away from the crowd as if he were sulky. He went to his camp, to where he was followed by another Wirreenun, and presently the two old fellows began fighting. Suddenly, when the attention of the blacks was fixed on this fight, there came a strange, whizzing, whirring noise from the scrub round. The women and children shrank together, for the sudden, uncanny noise frightened them. And they knew that it was made by the spirits who were coming to assist at the initiation of the boys into young manhood. The noise really sounded, if you had not the dread of spirits in your mind, just as if some one had a circular piece of wood at the end of a string and were whirling it round and round.

As the noise went on, the women said, in an awestricken tone, "Gurraymy," that is "borah devil," and clutched their children tighter to them. The boys said "Gayandy," and their eyes extended with fear.

"Gayandy" meant borah devil too, but the women must not even use the same word as the boys and men to express the borah spirit, for all concerning the mysteries of borah are sacred from the ears, eyes, or tongues of women.

The next day a shift was made of the camps. They were moved to inside the big ring that the black fellows had made. This move was attended with a certain amount of ceremony. In the afternoon, before the move had taken place, all the black fellows left their camps and went away into the scrub. Then just about sundown they were all to be seen walking in single file out of the scrub, along the path which they had previously banked on each side. Every man had a fire stick in one hand and a green switch in the other. When these men reached the middle of the enclosed ring was the time for the young people and women to leave the old camps, and move into the borah ring. Inside this ring they made their camps, had their suppers and corroboreed, as on previous evenings, up to a certain stage. Before, on this occasion, that stage arrived, Byamee, who was greatest of the Wirreenun present, had shown his power in a remarkable way. For some days the Mahthi had been behaving with a great want of respect for the wise men of the tribes. Instead of treating their sayings and doings with the silent awe the Wirreenun expect, they had kept up an incessant chatter and laughter amongst themselves, playing and shouting as if the tribes were not contemplating the solemnisation of their most sacred rites. Frequently the Wirreenun sternly bade them be silent. But admonitions were useless, gaily chattered and laughed the Mahthi. At length Byamee, mightiest and most famous of the Wirreenun, rose, strode over to the camp of Mahthi, and said fiercely to them: "I, Byamee, whom all the tribes hold in honour, have thrice bade you Mahthi cease your chatter and laughter. But you heeded me not. To my voice were added the voices of the Wirreenun of other tribes. But you heeded not. Think you the Wirreenun will make any of your tribe young men when you heed not their words? No, I tell you. From this day forth no Mahthi shall speak again as men speak. You wish to make noise, to be a noisy tribe and a disturber of men; a tribe who cannot keep quiet when strangers are in the camp; a tribe who understand not sacred things. So be it. You shall, and your descendants, for ever make a noise, but it shall not be the noise of speech, or the noise of laughter. It shall be the noise of barking and the noise of howling. And from this day if ever a Mahthi

speaks, woe to those who hear him, for even as they hear shall they be turned to stone."

And as the Mahthi opened their mouths, and tried to laugh and speak derisive words, they found, even as Byamee said, so were they. They could but bark and howl; the powers of speech and laughter had they lost. And as they realised their loss, into their eyes came a look of yearning and dumb entreaty which will be seen in the eyes of their descendants for ever. A feeling of wonder and awe fell on the various camps as they watched Byamee march back to his tribe.

When Byamee was seated again in his camp, he asked the women why they were not grinding doonburr. And the women said: "Gone are our dayoorls, and we know not where."

"You lie," said Byamee. "You have lent them to the Dummerh, who came so often to borrow, though I bade you not lend."

"No, Byamee, we lent them not."

"Go to the camp of the Dummerh, and ask for your dayoorl."

The women, with the fear of the fate of the Mahthi did they disobey, went, though well they knew they had not lent the dayoorl. As they went they asked at each camp if the tribe there would lend them a dayoorl, but at each camp they were given the same answer, namely, that the dayoorls were gone and none knew where. The Dummerh had asked to borrow them, and in each instance been refused, yet had the stones gone.

As the women went on they heard a strange noise, as of the cry of spirits, a sound like a smothered "Oom, oom, oom, oom." The cry sounded high in the air through the tops of trees, then low on the ground through the grasses, until it seemed as if the spirits were everywhere. The women clutched tighter their fire sticks, and said: "Let us go back. The Wondah are about," And swiftly they sped towards their camp, hearing ever in the air the "Oom, oom, oom" of the spirits.

They told Byamee that all the tribes had lost their dayoorls, and that the spirits were about, and even as they spoke came the sound of "Oom,

oom, oom, oom," at the back of their own camp.

The women crouched together, but Byamee flashed a fire stick whence came the sound, and as the light flashed on the place he saw no one, but stranger than all, he saw two dayoorls moving along, and yet could see no one moving them, and as the dayoorls moved swiftly away, louder and louder rose the sound of "Oom, oom, oom, oom," until the air seemed full of invisible spirits. Then Byamee knew that indeed the Wondah were about, and he too clutched his fire stick and went back into his camp.

In the morning it was seen that not only were all the dayoorls gone, but the camp of the Dummerh was empty and they too had gone. When no one would lend the Dummerh dayoorls, they had said, "Then we can grind no doonburr unless the Wondah bring us stones." And scarcely were the words said before they saw a dayoorl moving towards them. At first they thought it was their own skill which enabled them only to express a wish to have it realised. But as dayoorl after dayoorl glided into their camp, and, passing through there, moved on, and as they moved was the sound of "Oom, oom, oom, oom," to be heard everywhere they knew it was the Wondah at work. And it was borne in upon them that where the dayoorl went they must go, or they would anger the spirits who had brought them through their camp.

They gathered up their belongings and followed in the track of the dayoorls, which had cut a pathway from Googoorewon to Girrahween, down which in high floods is now a water-course. From Girrahween, on the dayoorls went to Dirangibirrah, and after them the Dummerh. Dirangibirrah is between Brewarrina and Widda Murtee, and there the dayoorls piled themselves up into a mountain, and there for the future had the blacks to go when they wanted good dayoorls. And the Dummerh were changed into pigeons, with a cry like the spirits of "Oom, oom, oom."

Another strange thing happened at this big borah. A tribe, called Ooboona, were camped at some distance from the other tribes. When any stranger went to their camp, it was noticed that the chief of the Ooboona would come out and flash a light on him, which killed him instantly. And no one knew what this light was, that carried death in its gleam. At last, Wahn the crow, said "I will take my biggest booreen

and go and see what this means. You others, do not follow me too closely, for though I have planned how to save myself from the deadly gleam, I might not be able to save you."

Wahn walked into the camp of the Ooboos, and as their chief turned to flash the light on him, he put up his booreen and completely shaded himself from it, and called aloud in a deep voice "Wah, wah, wah, wah" which so startled Ooboos that he dropped his light, and said "What is the matter? You startled me. I did not know who you were and might have hurt you, though I had no wish to, for the Wahn are my friends."

"I cannot stop now," said the Wahn, "I must go back to my camp. I have forgotten something I wanted to show you. I'll be back soon." And so saying, swiftly ran Wahn back to where he had left his boondee, then back he came almost before Ooboos realised that he had gone. Back he came, and stealing up behind Ooboos dealt him a blow with his boondee that avenged amply the victims of the deadly light, by stretching the chief of the Ooboos a corpse on the ground at his feet. Then crying triumphantly, "Wah, wah, wah," back to his camp went Wahn and told what he had done.

This night, when the Borah corroboree began, all the women relations of the boys to be made young men, corroboreed all night. Towards the end of the night all the young women were ordered into bough humpies, which had been previously made all round the edge of the embankment surrounding the ring. The old women stayed on.

The men who were to have charge of the boys to be made young men, were told now to be ready to seize hold each of his special charge, to carry him off down the beaten track to the scrub. When every man had, at a signal, taken his charge on his shoulder, they all started dancing round the ring. Then the old women were told to come and say good-bye to the boys, after which they were ordered to join the young women in the humpies. About five men watched them into the humpies, then pulled the boughs down on the top of them that they might see nothing further.

When the women were safely imprisoned beneath the boughs, the men carrying the boys swiftly disappeared down the track into the scrub. When they were out of sight the five black fellows came and pulled the

bought away and released the women, who went now to their camps. But however curious these women were as to what rites attended the boys' initiation into manhood, they knew no questions would elicit any information. In some months' time they might see their boys return minus, perhaps, a front tooth, and with some extra scarifications on their bodies, but beyond that, and a knowledge of the fact that they had not been allowed to look on the face of woman since their disappearance into the scrub, they were never enlightened.

The next day the tribes made ready to travel to the place of the little borah, which would be held in about four days' time, at about ten or twelve miles distance from the scene of the big borah.

At the place of the little borah a ring of grass is made instead of one of earth. The tribes all travel together there, camp, and have a corroboree. The young women are sent to bed early, and the old women stay until the time when the boys bade farewell to them at the big borah, at which hour the boys are brought into the little borah and allowed to say a last good-bye to the old women. Then they are taken away by the men who have charge of them together. They stay together for a short time, then probably separate, each man with his one boy going in a different direction. The man keeps strict charge of the boy for at least six months, during which time he may not even look at his own mother. At the end of about six months he may come back to his tribe, but the effect of his isolation is that he is too wild and frightened to speak even to his mother, from whom he runs away if she approaches him, until by degrees the strangeness wears off.

But at this borah of Byamee the tribes were not destined to meet the boys at the little borah. Just as they were gathering up their goods for a start, into the camp staggered Millindooloonubbah, the widow, crying, "You all left me, widow that I was, with my large family of children, to travel alone. How could the little feet of my children keep up to you? Can my back bear more than one goolay? Have I more than two arms and one back? Then how could I come swiftly with so many children? Yet none of you stayed to help me. And as you went from each water hole you drank all the water. When, tired and thirsty, I reached a water hole and my children cried for a drink, what did I find to give them? Mud, only mud. Then thirsty and worn, my children crying and

their mother helpless to comfort them; on we came to the next hole. What did we see, as we strained our eyes to find water? Mud, only mud. As we reached hole after hole and found only mud, one by one my children laid down and died; died for want of a drink, which Millindooloonubbah their mother could not give them."

As she spoke, swiftly went a woman to her with a wirree of water. "Too late, too late," she said. "Why should a mother live when her children are dead?" And she lay back with a groan. But as she felt the water cool her parched lips and soften her swollen tongue, she made a final effort, rose to her feet, and waving her hands round the camps of the tribes, cried aloud: "You were in such haste to get here. You shall stay here. Googoolguyyah. Googoolguyyah. Turn into trees. Turn into trees." Then back she fell, dead. And as she fell, the tribes that were standing round the edge of the ring, preparatory to gathering their goods and going, and that her hand pointed to as it waved round, turned into trees. There they now stand. The tribes in the background were changed each according to the name they were known by, into that bird or beast of the same name. The barking Mahthi into dogs; the Byahmul into black swans: the Wahns into crows, and so on. And there at the place of the big borah, you can see the trees standing tall and gaunt, sad-looking in their sombre hues, waving with a sad wailing their branches towards the lake which covers now the place where the borah was held. And it bears the name of Googoorewon, the place of trees, and round the edge of it is still to be seen the remains of the borah ring of earth. And it is known as a great place of meeting for the birds that bear the names of the tribes of old. The Byahmuls sail proudly about; the pelicans, their water rivals in point of size and beauty; the ducks, and many others too numerous to mention. The Ooboos, or blue-tongued lizards, glide in and out through the grass. Now and then is heard the "Oom, oom, oom," of the dummerh, and occasionally a cry from the bird Millindooloonubbah of "Googoolguyyah, googoolguyyah." And in answer comes the wailing of the gloomy-looking balah trees, and then a rustling shirr through the bibbil branches, until at last every tree gives forth its voice and makes sad the margin of the lake with echoes of the past.

But the men and boys who were at the place of the little borah escaped the metamorphosis. They waited long for the arrival of the tribes who

never came.

At last Byamee said: "Surely mighty enemies have slain our friends, and not one escapes to tell us of their fate. Even now these enemies may be upon our track; let us go into a far country."

And swiftly they went to Noondoo. Hurrying along with them, a dog of Byamee's, which would fain have lain by the roadside rather than have travelled so swiftly, but Byamee would not leave her and hurried her on. When they reached the springs of Noondoo, the dog sneaked away into a thick scrub, and there were born her litter of pups. But such pups as surely man never looked at before. The bodies of dogs, and the heads of pigs, and the fierceness and strength of devils. And gone is the life of a man who meets in a scrub of Noondoo an earmoonan, for surely will it slay him. Not even did Byamee ever dare to go near the breed of his old dog. And Byamee, the mighty Wirreenun, lives for ever. But no man must look upon his face, lest surely will he die. So alone in a thick scrub, on one of the Noondoo ridges, lives this old man, Byamee, the mightiest of Wirreenun.



"A CHRISTMAS MATINEE"*

Project Gutenberg's *The Children's Book of Christmas Stories*, by Various
BY MRS. M.A.L. LANE

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It was the day before Christmas in the year 189-. Snow was falling heavily in the streets of Boston, but the crowd of shoppers seemed undiminished. As the storm increased, groups gathered at the corners and in sheltering doorways to wait for belated cars; but the holiday cheer was in the air, and there was no grumbling. Mothers dragging tired children through the slush of the streets; pretty girls hurrying home for the holidays; here and there a harassed-looking man with perhaps a single package which he had taken a whole morning to select--all had the same spirit of tolerant good-humor.

"School Street! School Street!" called the conductor of an electric car. A group of young people at the farther end of the car started to their feet. One of them, a young man wearing a heavy fur-trimmed coat, addressed the conductor angrily.

"I said, 'Music Hall,' didn't I?" he demanded. "Now we've got to walk back in the snow because of your stupidity!"

"Oh, never mind, Frank!" one of the girls interposed. "We ought to have been looking out ourselves! Six of us, and we went by without a thought! It is all Mrs. Tirrell's fault! She shouldn't have been so entertaining!"

The young matron dimpled and blushed. "That's charming of you, Maidie," she said, gathering up her silk skirts as she prepared to step down into the pond before her. "The compliment makes up for the blame. But how it snows!"

"It doesn't matter. We all have gaiters on," returned Maidie Williams, undisturbed.

"Fares, please!" said the conductor stolidly.

Frank Armstrong thrust his gloved hand deep into his pocket with angry vehemence. "There's your money," he said, "and be quick about the change, will you? We've lost time enough!"

The man counted out the change with stiff, red fingers, closed his lips firmly as if to keep back an obvious rejoinder, rang up the six fares with careful accuracy, and gave the signal to go ahead. The car went on into the drifting storm.

Armstrong laughed shortly as he rapidly counted the bits of silver lying in his open palm. He turned instinctively, but two or three cars were already between him and the one he was looking for.

"The fellow must be an imbecile," he said, rejoining the group on the crossing. "He's given me back a dollar and twenty cents, and I handed

him a dollar bill."

"Oh, can't you stop him?" cried Maidie Williams, with a backward step into the wet street.

The Harvard junior, who was carrying her umbrella, protested: "What's the use. Miss Williams? He'll make it up before he gets to Scollay Square, you may be sure. Those chaps don't lose anything. Why, the other day, I gave one a quarter and he went off as cool as you please. 'Where's my change?' said I. 'You gave me a nickel,' said he. And there wasn't anybody to swear that I didn't except myself, and I didn't count."

"But that doesn't make any difference," insisted the girl warmly. "Because one conductor was dishonest, we needn't be. I beg your pardon, Frank, but it does seem to me just stealing."

"Oh, come along!" said her cousin, with an easy laugh. "I guess the West End Corporation won't go without their dinners to-morrow. Here, Maidie, here's the ill-gotten fifty cents. _I_ think you ought to treat us all after the concert; still, I won't urge you. I wash my hands of all responsibility. But I do wish you hadn't such an unpleasant conscience."

Maidie flushed under the sting of his cousinly rudeness, but she went on quietly with the rest. It was evident that any attempt to overtake the car was out of the question.

"Did you notice his number, Frank?" she asked, suddenly.

"No, I never thought of it" said Frank, stopping short. "However, I probably shouldn't make any complaint if I had. I shall forget all about it tomorrow. I find it's never safe to let the sun go down on my wrath. It's very likely not to be there the next day."

"I wasn't thinking of making a complaint," said Maidie; but the two young men were enjoying the small joke too much to notice what she said.

The great doorway of Music Hall was just ahead. In a moment the party were within its friendly shelter, stamping off the snow. The girls

were adjusting veils and hats with adroit feminine touches; the pretty chaperon was beaming approval upon them, and the young men were taking off their wet overcoats, when Maidie turned again in sudden desperation.

"Mr. Harris," she said, rather faintly, for she did not like to make herself disagreeable, "do you suppose that car comes right back from Scollay Square?"

"What car?" asked Walter Harris, blankly. "Oh, the one we came in? Yes, I suppose it does. They're running all the time, anyway. Why, you are not sick, are you, Miss Williams?"

There was genuine concern in his tone. This girl, with her sweet, vibrant voice, her clear gray eyes, seemed very charming to him. She wasn't beautiful, perhaps, but she was the kind of girl he liked. There was a steady earnestness in the gray eyes that made him think of his mother.

"No," said Maidie, slowly. "I'm all right, thank you. But I wish I could find that man again. I know sometimes they have to make it up if their accounts are wrong, and I couldn't--we couldn't feel very comfortable--"

Frank Armstrong interrupted her. "Maidie," he said, with the studied calmness with which one speaks to an unreasonable child, "you are perfectly absurd. Here it is within five minutes of the tune for the concert to begin. It is impossible to tell when that car is coming back. You are making us all very uncomfortable. Mrs. Tirrell, won't you please tell her not to spoil our afternoon?"

"I think he's right, Maidie," said Mrs. Tirrell. "It's very nice of you to feel so sorry for the poor man, but he really was very careless. It was all his own fault. And just think how far he made us walk! My feet are quite damp. We ought to go in directly or we shall all take cold, and I'm sure you wouldn't like that, my dear."

She led the way as she spoke, the two girls and young Armstrong following. Maidie hesitated. It was so easy to go in, to forget everything in the light and warmth and excitement.

"No," said she, very firmly, and as much to herself as to the young man who stood waiting for her. "I must go back and try to make it right. I'm so sorry, Mr. Harris, but if you will tell them--"

"Why, I'm going with you, of course" said the young fellow, impulsively. "If I'd only looked once at the man I'd go alone, but I shouldn't know him from Adam."

Maidie laughed. "Oh, I don't want to lose the whole concert, Mr. Harris, and Frank, has all the tickets. You must go after them and try to make my peace. I'll come just as soon as I can. Don't wait for me, please. If you'll come and look for me here the first number, and not let them scold me too much--" She ended with an imploring little catch in her breath that was almost a sob.

"They sha'n't say a word, Miss Williams!" cried Walter Harris, with honest admiration in his eyes.

But she was gone already, and conscious that further delay was only making matters worse, he went on into the hall.

Meanwhile, the car swung heavily along the wet rails on its way to the turning-point. It was nearly empty now. An old gentleman and his nurse were the only occupants. Jim Stevens, the conductor, had stepped inside the car.

"Too bad I forgot those young people wanted to get off at Music Hall," he was thinking to himself. "I don't see how I came to do it. That chap looked as if he wanted to complain of me, and I don't know as I blame him. I'd have said I was sorry if he hadn't been so sharp with his tongue. I hope he won't complain just now. 'Twould be a pretty bad time for me to get into trouble, with Mary and the baby both sick. I'm too sleepy to be good for much, that's a fact. Sitting up three nights running takes hold of a fellow somehow when he's at work all day. The rent's paid, that's one thing, if it hasn't left me but half a dollar to my name. Hullo!" He was struck by a sudden distinct recollection of the coins he had returned. "Why, I gave him fifty cents too much!"

He glanced up at the dial which indicated the fares and began to count

the change in his pocket. He knew exactly how much money he had had at the beginning of the trip. He counted carefully. Then he plunged his hand into the heavy canvas pocket of his coat. Perhaps he had half a dollar there. No, it was empty!

He faced the fact reluctantly. Fifty cents short, ten fares! Gone into the pocket of the young gentleman with the fur collar! The conductor's hand shook as he put the money back in his pocket. It meant--what did it mean? He drew a long breath.

Christmas Eve! A dark dreary little room upstairs in a noisy tenement house. A pale, thin woman on a shabby lounge vainly trying to quiet a fretful child. The child is thin and pale, too, with a hard, racking cough. There is a small fire in the stove, a very small fire; coal is so high. The medicine stands on the shelf. "Medicine won't do much good," the doctor had said; "he needs beef and cream."

Jim's heart sank at the thought. He could almost hear the baby asking; "Isn't papa coming soon? Isn't he, mamma?"

"Poor little kid!" Jim said, softly, under his breath. "And I shan't have a thing to take home to him; nor Mary's violets, either. It'll be the first Christmas that ever happened. I suppose that chap would think it was ridiculous for me to be buying violets. He wouldn't understand what the flowers mean to Mary. Perhaps he didn't notice I gave him too much. That kind don't know how much they have. They just pull it out as if it was newspaper."

The conductor went out into the snow to help the nurse, who was assisting the old gentleman to the ground. Then the car swung on again. Jim turned up the collar of his coat about his ears and stamped his feet. There was the florist's shop where he had meant to buy the violets, and the toy-shop was just around the corner.

A thought flashed across his tired brain. "Plenty of men would do it; they do it every day. Nobody ever would be the poorer for it. This car will be crowded going home. I needn't ring in every fare; nobody could tell. But Mary! She wouldn't touch those violets if she knew. And she'd know. I'd have to tell her. I couldn't keep it from her, she's that

quick."

He jumped off to adjust the trolley with a curious sense of unreality. It couldn't be that he was really going home this Christmas Eve with empty hands. Well, they must all suffer together for his carelessness. It was his own fault, but it was hard. And he was so tired!

To his amazement he found his eyes were blurred as he watched the people crowding into the car. What? Was he going to cry like a baby--he, a great burly man of thirty years?

"It's no use," he thought. "I couldn't do it. The first time I gave Mary violets was the night she said she'd marry me. I told her then I'd do my best to make her proud of me. I guess she wouldn't be very proud of a man who could cheat. She'd rather starve than have a ribbon she couldn't pay for."

He rang up a dozen fares with a steady hand. The temptation was over. Six more strokes--then nine without a falter. He even imagined the bell rang more distinctly than usual, even encouragingly. The car stopped. Jim flung the door open with a triumphant sweep of his arm. He felt ready to face the world. But the baby--his arm dropped. It was hard.

He turned to help the young girl who was waiting at the step. Through the whirling snow he saw her eager face, with a quick recognition lighting the steady eyes, and wondered dimly, as he stood with his hand on the signal-strap, where he could have seen her before.

He knew immediately.

"There was a mistake," she said, with a shy tremor in her voice. "You gave us too much change and here it is." She held out to Jim the piece of silver which had given him such an unhappy quarter of an hour.

He took it like one dazed. Would the young lady think he was crazy to care so much about so small a coin? He must say something. "Thank you, miss," he stammered as well as he could. "You see, I thought it was gone--and there's the baby--and it's Christmas Eve--and my wife's sick--and you can't understand--"

It certainly was not remarkable that she couldn't.

"But I do," she said, simply. "I was afraid of that. And I thought perhaps there was a baby, so I brought my Christmas present for her," and something else dropped into Jim's cold hand.

"What you waiting for?" shouted the motorman from the front platform. The girl had disappeared in the snow.

Jim rang the bell to go ahead, and gazed again at the two shining half dollars in his hand.

"I didn't have a chance to tell her," he explained to his wife late in the evening, as he sat in a tiny rocking-chair several sizes too small for him, "that the baby wasn't a her at all, though if I thought he'd grow up into such a lovely one as she is, I don't know but I almost wish he was."

"Poor Jim!" said Mary, with a little laugh as she put up her hand to stroke his rough cheek. "I guess you're tired."

"And I should say," he added, stretching out his long legs toward the few red sparks in the bottom of the grate, "I should say she had tears in her eyes, too, but I was that near crying myself I couldn't be sure."

The little room was sweet with the odour of English violets. Asleep in the bed lay the boy, a toy horse clasped close to his breast.

"Bless her heart!" said Mary, softly.

"Well, Miss Williams," said Walter Harris, as he sprang to meet a snow-covered figure coming swiftly along the sidewalk. "I can see that you found him. You've lost the first number, but they won't scold you--not this time."

The girl turned a radiant face upon him. "Thank you," she said, shaking the snowy crystals from her skirt. "I don't care now if they do. I should have lost more than that if I had stayed."



THE STORY OF DSCHEMIL AND DSCHEMILA

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Grey Fairy Book*, by Various

There was once a man whose name was Dschemil, and he had a cousin who was called Dschemila. They had been betrothed by their parents when they were children, and now Dschemil thought that the time had come for them to be married, and he went two or three days' journey, to the nearest big town, to buy furniture for the new house.

While he was away, Dschemila and her friends set off to the neighbouring woods to pick up sticks, and as she gathered them she found an iron mortar lying on the ground. She placed it on her bundle of sticks, but the mortar would not stay still, and whenever she raised the bundle to put it on her shoulders it slipped off sideways. At length she saw the only way to carry the mortar was to tie it in the very middle of her bundle, and had just unfastened her sticks, when she heard her companions' voices.

'Dschemila, what are you doing? it is almost dark, and if you mean to come with us you must be quick!'

But Dschemila only replied, 'You had better go back without me, for I am not going to leave my mortar behind, if I stay here till midnight.'

'Do as you like,' said the girls, and started on their walk home.

The night soon fell, and at the last ray of light the mortar suddenly became an ogre, who threw Dschemila on his back, and carried her off into a desert place, distant a whole month's journey from her native town. Here he shut her into a castle, and told her not to fear, as her life was safe. Then he went back to his wife, leaving Dschemila weeping over the fate that she had brought upon herself.

Meanwhile the other girls had reached home, and Dschemila's mother came out to look for her daughter.

'What have you done with her?' she asked anxiously.

'We had to leave her in the wood,' they replied, 'for she had picked up an iron mortar, and could not manage to carry it.'

So the old woman set off at once for the forest, calling to her daughter as she hurried along.

'Do go home,' cried the townspeople, as they heard her; 'we will go and look for your daughter; you are only a woman, and it is a task that needs strong men.'

But she answered, 'Yes, go; but I will go with you! Perhaps it will be only her corpse that we shall find after all. She has most likely been stung by asps, or eaten by wild beasts.'

The men, seeing her heart was bent on it, said no more, but told one of the girls she must come with them, and show them the place where they had left Dschemila. They found the bundle of wood lying where she had dropped it, but the maiden was nowhere to be seen.

'Dschemila! Dschemila!' cried they; but nobody answered.

'If we make a fire, perhaps she will see it,' said one of the men. And they lit a fire, and then went, one this way, and one that, through the forest, to look for her, whispering to each other that if she had been killed by a lion they would be sure to find some trace of it; or if she had fallen asleep, the sound of their voices would wake her; or if a snake had bitten her, they would at least come on her corpse.

All night they searched, and when morning broke and they knew no more than before what had become of the maiden, they grew weary, and said to the mother: 'It is no use. Let us go home, nothing has happened to your daughter, except that she has run away with a man.'

'Yes, I will come,' answered she, 'but I must first look in the river.'

Perhaps some one has thrown her in there.' But the maiden was not in the river.

For four days the father and mother waited and watched for their child to come back; then they gave up hope, and said to each other: 'What is to be done? What are we to say to the man to whom Dschemila is betrothed? Let us kill a goat, and bury its head in the grave, and when the man returns we must tell him Dschemila is dead.'

Very soon the bridegroom came back, bringing with him carpets and soft cushions for the house of his bride. And as he entered the town Dschemila's father met him, saying, 'Greeting to you. She is dead.'

At these words the young man broke into loud cries, and it was some time before he could speak. Then he turned to one of the crowd who had gathered round him, and asked: 'Where have they buried her?'

'Come to the churchyard with me,' answered he; and the young man went with him, carrying with him some of the beautiful things he had brought. These he laid on the grass and then began to weep afresh. All day he stayed, and at nightfall he gathered up his stuffs and carried them to his own house. But when the day dawned he took them in his arms and returned to the grave, where he remained as long as it was light, playing softly on his flute. And this he did daily for six months.

One morning, a man who was wandering through the desert, having lost his way, came upon a lonely castle. The sun was very hot, and the man was very tired, so he said to himself, 'I will rest a little in the shadow of this castle.' He stretched himself out comfortably, and was almost asleep, when he heard a voice calling to him softly:

'Are you a ghost,' it said, 'or a man?'

He looked up, and saw a girl leaning out of a window, and he answered:

'I am a man, and a better one, too, than your father or your grandfather.'

'May all good luck be with you,' said she; 'but what has brought you

into this land of ogres and horrors?'

'Does an ogre really live in this castle?' asked he.

'Certainly he does,' replied the girl, 'and as night is not far off he will be here soon. So, dear friend, depart quickly, lest he return and snap you up for supper.'

'But I am so thirsty!' said the man. 'Be kind, and give me some drink, or else I shall die! Surely, even in this desert there must be some spring?'

'Well, I have noticed that whenever the ogre brings back water he always comes from that side; so if you follow the same direction perhaps you may find some.'

The man jumped up at once and was about to start, when the maiden spoke again: 'Tell me, where are you going?'

'Why do you want to know?'

'I have an errand for you; but tell me first whether you go east or west.'

'I travel to Damascus.'

'Then do this for me. As you pass through our village, ask for a man called Dschemil, and say to him: "Dschemila greets you, from the castle, which lies far away, and is rocked by the wind. In my grave lies only a goat. So take heart."'

And the man promised, and went his way, till he came to a spring of water. And he drank a great draught and then lay on the bank and slept quietly. When he woke he said to himself, 'The maiden did a good deed when she told me where to find water. A few hours more, and I should have been dead. So I will do her bidding, and seek out her native town and the man for whom the message was given.'

For a whole month he travelled, till at last he reached the town where

Dschemil dwelt, and as luck would have it, there was the young man sitting before his door with his beard unshaven and his shaggy hair hanging over his eyes.

'Welcome, stranger,' said Dschemil, as the man stopped. 'Where have you come from?'

'I come from the west, and go towards the east,' he answered.

'Well, stop with us awhile, and rest and eat!' said Dschemil. And the man entered; and food was set before him, and he sat down with the father of the maiden and her brothers, and Dschemil. Only Dschemil himself was absent, squatting on the threshold.

'Why do you not eat too?' asked the stranger. But one of the young men whispered hastily: 'Leave him alone. Take no notice! It is only at night that he ever eats.'

So the stranger went on silently with his food. Suddenly one of Dschemil's brothers called out and said: 'Dschemil, bring us some water!' And the stranger remembered his message and said:

'Is there a man here named "Dschemil"? I lost my way in the desert, and came to a castle, and a maiden looked out of the window and...'

'Be quiet,' they cried, fearing that Dschemil might hear. But Dschemil had heard, and came forward and said:

'What did you see? Tell me truly, or I will cut off your head this instant!'

'My lord,' replied the stranger, 'as I was wandering, hot and tired, through the desert, I saw near me a great castle, and I said aloud, "I will rest a little in its shadow." And a maiden looked out of a window and said, "Are you a ghost or a man?" And I answered, "I am a man, and a better one, too, than your father or your grandfather." And I was thirsty and asked for water, but she had none to give me, and I felt like to die. Then she told me that the ogre, in whose castle she dwelt, brought in water always from the same side, and that if I too went that

way most likely I should come to it. But before I started she begged me to go to her native town, and if I met a man called Dschemil I was to say to him, "Dschemila greets you, from the castle which lies far away, and is rocked by the wind. In my grave lies only a goat. So take heart."

Then Dschemil turned to his family and said: 'Is this true? and is Dschemila not dead at all, but simply stolen from her home?'

'No, no,' replied they, 'his story is a pack of lies. Dschemila is really dead. Everybody knows it.'

'That I shall see for myself,' said Dschemil, and, snatching up a spade, hastened off to the grave where the goat's head lay buried.

And they answered, 'Then hear what really happened. When you were away, she went with the other maidens to the forest to gather wood. And there she found an iron mortar, which she wished to bring home; but she could not carry it, neither would she leave it. So the maidens returned without her, and as night was come, we all set out to look for her, but found nothing. And we said, "The bridegroom will be here to-morrow, and when he learns that she is lost, he will set out to seek her, and we shall lose him too. Let us kill a goat, and bury it in her grave, and tell him she is dead." Now you know, so do as you will. Only, if you go to seek her, take with you this man with whom she has spoken that he may show you the way.' 'Yes; that is the best plan,' replied Dschemil; 'so give me food, and hand me my sword, and we will set out directly.'

But the stranger answered: 'I am not going to waste a whole month in leading you to the castle! If it were only a day or two's journey I would not mind; but a month--no!'

'Come with me then for three days,' said Dschemil, 'and put me in the right road, and I will reward you richly.'

'Very well,' replied the stranger, 'so let it be.'

For three days they travelled from sunrise to sunset, then the stranger said: 'Dschemil?'

'Yes,' replied he.

'Go straight on till you reach a spring, then go on a little farther, and soon you will see the castle standing before you.'

'So I will,' said Dschemil.

'Farewell, then,' said the stranger, and turned back the way he had come.

It was six and twenty days before Dschemil caught sight of a green spot rising out of the sandy desert, and knew that the spring was near at last. He hastened his steps, and soon was kneeling by its side, drinking thirstily of the bubbling water. Then he lay down on the cool grass, and began to think. 'If the man was right, the castle must be somewhere about. I had better sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I shall be able to see where it is.' So he slept long and peacefully. When he awoke the sun was high, and he jumped up and washed his face and hands in the spring, before going on his journey. He had not walked far, when the castle suddenly appeared before him, though a moment before not a trace of it could be seen. 'How am I to get in?' he thought. 'I dare not knock, lest the ogre should hear me. Perhaps it would be best for me to climb up the wall, and wait to see what will happen. So he did, and after sitting on the top for about an hour, a window above him opened, and a voice said: 'Dschemil!' He looked up, and at the sight of Dschemila, whom he had so long believed to be dead, he began to weep.

'Dear cousin,' she whispered, 'what has brought you here?'

'My grief at losing you.'

'Oh! go away at once. If the ogre comes back he will kill you.'

'I swear by your head, queen of my heart, that I have not found you only to lose you again! If I must die, well, I must!'

'Oh, what can I do for you?'

'Anything you like!'

'If I let you down a cord, can you make it fast under your arms, and climb up?'

'Of course I can,' said he.

So Dschemila lowered the cord, and Dschemil tied it round him, and climbed up to her window. Then they embraced each other tenderly, and burst into tears of joy.

'But what shall I do when the ogre returns?' asked she.

'Trust to me,' he said.

Now there was a chest in the room, where Dschemila kept her clothes. And she made Dschemil get into it, and lie at the bottom, and told him to keep very still.

He was only hidden just in time, for the lid was hardly closed when the ogre's heavy tread was heard on the stairs. He flung open the door, bringing men's flesh for himself and lamb's flesh for the maiden. 'I smell the smell of a man!' he thundered. 'What is he doing here?'

'How could any one have come to this desert place?' asked the girl, and burst into tears.

'Do not cry,' said the ogre; 'perhaps a raven has dropped some scraps from his claws.'

'Ah, yes, I was forgetting,' answered she. 'One did drop some bones about.'

'Well, burn them to powder,' replied the ogre, 'so that I may swallow it.'

So the maiden took some bones and burned them, and gave them to the ogre, saying, 'Here is the powder, swallow it.'

And when he had swallowed the powder the ogre stretched himself out and went to sleep.

In a little while the man's flesh, which the maiden was cooking for the ogre's supper, called out and said:

'Hist! Hist!
A man lies in the kist!'

And the lamb's flesh answered:

'He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.'

The ogre moved sleepily, and asked, 'What did the meat say, Dschemila?'

'Only that I must be sure to add salt.'

'Well, add salt.'

'Yes, I have done so,' said she.

The ogre was soon sound asleep again, when the man's flesh called out a second time:

'Hist! Hist!
A man lies in the kist!'

And the lamb's flesh answered:

'He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.'

'What did it say, Dschemila?' asked the ogre.

'Only that I must add pepper.'

'Well, add pepper.'

'Yes, I have done so,' said she.

The ogre had had a long day's hunting, and could not keep himself awake. In a moment his eyes were tight shut, and then the man's flesh called out for the third time:

'Hist! Hist
A man lies in the kist,'

And the lamb's flesh answered:

'He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.'

'What did it say, Dschemila?' asked the ogre.

'Only that it was ready, and that I had better take it off the fire.'

'Then if it is ready, bring it to me, and I will eat it.'

So she brought it to him, and while he was eating she supped off the lamb's flesh herself, and managed to put some aside for her cousin.

When the ogre had finished, and had washed his hands, he said to Dschemila: 'Make my bed, for I am tired.'

So she made his bed, and put a nice soft pillow for his head, and tucked him up.

'Father,' she said suddenly.

'Well, what is it?'

'Dear father, if you are really asleep, why are your eyes always open?'

'Why do you ask that, Dschemila? Do you want to deal treacherously with me?'

'No, of course not, father. How could I, and what would be the use of

it?'

'Well, why do you want to know?'

'Because last night I woke up and saw the whole place shining in a red light, which frightened me.'

'That happens when I am fast asleep.'

'And what is the good of the pin you always keep here so carefully?'

'If I throw that pin in front of me, it turns into an iron mountain.'

'And this darning needle?'

'That becomes a sea.'

'And this hatchet?'

'That becomes a thorn hedge, which no one can pass through. But why do you ask all these questions? I am sure you have something in your head.'

'Oh, I just wanted to know; and how could anyone find me out here?' and she began to cry.

'Oh, don't cry, I was only in fun,' said the ogre.

He was soon asleep again, and a yellow light shone through the castle.

'Come quick!' called Dschemil from the chest; 'we must fly now while the ogre is asleep.'

'Not yet,' she said, 'there is a yellow light shining. I don't think he is asleep.'

So they waited for an hour. Then Dschemil whispered again: 'Wake up! There is no time to lose!'

'Let me see if he is asleep,' said she, and she peeped in, and saw a red

light shining. Then she stole back to her cousin, and asked, 'But how are we to get out?'

'Get the rope, and I will let you down.'

So she fetched the rope, the hatchet, and the pin and the needles, and said, 'Take them, and put them in the pocket of your cloak, and be sure not to lose them.'

Dschemil put them carefully in his pocket, and tied the rope round her, and let her down over the wall.

'Are you safe?' he asked.

'Yes, quite.'

'Then untie the rope, so that I may draw it up.'

And Dschemila did as she was told, and in a few minutes he stood beside her.

Now all this time the ogre was asleep, and had heard nothing. Then his dog came to him and said, 'O, sleeper, are you having pleasant dreams? Dschemila has forsaken you and run away.'

The ogre got out of bed, gave the dog a kick, then went back again, and slept till morning.

When it grew light, he rose, and called, 'Dschemila! Dschemila!' but he only heard the echo of his own voice! Then he dressed himself quickly; buckled on his sword and whistled to his dog, and followed the road which he knew the fugitives must have taken. 'Cousin,' said Dschemila suddenly, and turning round as she spoke.

'What is it?' answered he.

'The ogre is coming after us. I saw him.'

'But where is he? I don't see him.'

'Over there. He only looks about as tall as a needle.'

Then they both began to run as fast as they could, while the ogre and his dog kept drawing always nearer. A few more steps, and he would have been by their side, when Dschemila threw the darning needle behind her. In a moment it became an iron mountain between them and their enemy.

'We will break it down, my dog and I,' cried the ogre in a rage, and they dashed at the mountain till they had forced a path through, and came ever nearer and nearer.

'Cousin!' said Dschemila suddenly.

'What is it?'

'The ogre is coming after us with his dog.'

'You go on in front then,' answered he; and they both ran on as fast as they could, while the ogre and the dog drew always nearer and nearer.

'They are close upon us!' cried the maiden, glancing behind, 'you must throw the pin.'

So Dschemil took the pin from his cloak and threw it behind him, and a dense thicket of thorns sprang up round them, which the ogre and his dog could not pass through.

'I will get through it somehow, if I burrow underground,' cried he, and very soon he and the dog were on the other side.

'Cousin,' said Dschemila, 'they are close to us now.'

'Go on in front, and fear nothing,' replied Dschemil.

So she ran on a little way, and then stopped.

'He is only a few yards away now,' she said, and Dschemil flung the hatchet on the ground, and it turned into a lake.

'I will drink, and my dog shall drink, till it is dry,' shrieked the ogre, and the dog drank so much that it burst and died. But the ogre did not stop for that, and soon the whole lake was nearly dry. Then he exclaimed, 'Dschemila, let your head become a donkey's head, and your hair fur!'

But when it was done, Dschemil looked at her in horror, and said, 'She is really a donkey, and not a woman at all!'

And he left her, and went home.

For two days poor Dschemila wandered about alone, weeping bitterly. When her cousin drew near his native town, he began to think over his conduct, and to feel ashamed of himself.

'Perhaps by this time she has changed back to her proper shape,' he said to himself, 'I will go and see!'

So he made all the haste he could, and at last he saw her seated on a rock, trying to keep off the wolves, who longed to have her for dinner. He drove them off and said, 'Get up, dear cousin, you have had a narrow escape.'

Dschemila stood up and answered, 'Bravo, my friend. You persuaded me to fly with you, and then left me helplessly to my fate.'

'Shall I tell you the truth?' asked he.

'Tell it.'

'I thought you were a witch, and I was afraid of you.'

'Did you not see me before my transformation? and did you not watch it happen under your very eyes, when the ogre bewitched me?'

'What shall I do?' said Dschemil. 'If I take you into the town, everyone will laugh, and say, "Is that a new kind of toy you have got? It has hands like a woman, feet like a woman, the body of a woman; but its head

is the head of an ass, and its hair is fur.'"

'Well, what do you mean to do with me?' asked Dschemila. 'Better take me home to my mother by night, and tell no one anything about it.'

'So I will,' said he.

They waited where they were till it was nearly dark, then Dschemil brought his cousin home.

'Is that Dschemil?' asked the mother when he knocked softly.

'Yes, it is.'

'And have you found her?'

'Yes, and I have brought her to you.'

'Oh, where is she? let me see her!' cried the mother.

'Here, behind me,' answered Dschemil.

But when the poor woman caught sight of her daughter, she shrieked, and exclaimed, 'Are you making fun of me? When did I ever give birth to an ass?'

'Hush!' said Dschemil, 'it is not necessary to let the whole world know! And if you look at her body, you will see two scars on it.'

'Mother,' sobbed Dschemila, 'do you really not know your own daughter?'

'Yes, of course I know her.'

'What are her two scars then?'

'On her thigh is a scar from the bite of a dog, and on her breast is the mark of a burn, where she pulled a lamp over her when she was little.'

'Then look at me, and see if I am not your daughter,' said Dschemila,

throwing off her clothes and showing her two scars.

And at the sight her mother embraced her, weeping.

'Dear daughter,' she cried, 'what evil fate has befallen you?'

'It was the ogre who carried me off first, and then bewitched me,' answered Dschemila.

'But what is to be done with you?' asked her mother.

'Hide me away, and tell no one anything about me. And you, dear cousin, say nothing to the neighbours, and if they should put questions, you can make answer that I have not yet been found.'

'So I will,' replied he.

Then he and her mother took her upstairs and hid her in a cupboard, where she stayed for a whole month, only going out to walk when all the world was asleep.

Meanwhile Dschemil had returned to his own home, where his father and mother, his brothers and neighbours, greeted him joyfully.

'When did you come back?' said they, 'and have you found Dschemila?'

'No, I searched the whole world after her, and could hear nothing of her.'

'Did you part company with the man who started with you?'

'Yes; after three days he got so weak and useless he could not go on. It must be a month by now since he reached home again. I went on and visited every castle, and looked in every house. But there were no signs of her; and so I gave it up.'

And they answered him: 'We told you before that it was no good. An ogre or an ogress must have snapped her up, and how can you expect to find her?'

'I loved her too much to be still,' he said.

But his friends did not understand, and soon they spoke to him again about it.

'We will seek for a wife for you. There are plenty of girls prettier than Dschemila.'

'I dare say; but I don't want them.'

'But what will you do with all the cushions and carpets, and beautiful things you bought for your house?'

'They can stay in the chests.'

'But the moths will eat them! For a few weeks, it is of no consequence, but after a year or two they will be quite useless.'

'And if they have to lie there ten years I will have Dschemila, and her only, for my wife. For a month, or even two months, I will rest here quietly. Then I will go and seek her afresh.'

'Oh, you are quite mad! Is she the only maiden in the world? There are plenty of others better worth having than she is.'

'If there are I have not seen them! And why do you make all this fuss? Every man knows his own business best.'

'Why, it is you who are making all the fuss yourself.'

But Dschemil turned and went into the house, for he did not want to quarrel.

Three months later a Jew, who was travelling across the desert, came to the castle, and laid himself down under the wall to rest.

In the evening the ogre saw him there and said to him, 'Jew, what are you doing here? Have you anything to sell?'

'I have only some clothes,' answered the Jew, who was in mortal terror of the ogre.

'Oh, don't be afraid of me,' said the ogre, laughing. 'I shall not eat you. Indeed, I mean to go a bit of the way with you myself.'

'I am ready, gracious sir,' replied the Jew, rising to his feet.

'Well, go straight on till you reach a town, and in that town you will find a maiden called Dschemila and a young man called Dschemil. Take this mirror and this comb with you, and say to Dschemila, "Your father, the ogre, greets you, and begs you to look at your face in this mirror, and it will appear as it was before, and to comb your hair with this comb, and it will be as formerly." If you do not carry out my orders, I will eat you the next time we meet.'

'Oh, I will obey you punctually,' cried the Jew.

After thirty days the Jew entered the gate of the town, and sat down in the first street he came to, hungry, thirsty, and very tired.

Quite by chance, Dschemil happened to pass by, and seeing a man sitting there, full in the glare of the sun, he stopped, and said, 'Get up at once, Jew; you will have a sunstroke if you sit in such a place.'

'Ah, good sir,' replied the Jew, 'for a whole month I have been travelling, and I am too tired to move.'

'Which way did you come?' asked Dschemil.

'From out there,' answered the Jew pointing behind him.

'And you have been travelling for a month, you say? Well, did you see anything remarkable?'

'Yes, good sir; I saw a castle, and lay down to rest under its shadow. And an ogre woke me, and told me to come to this town, where I should find a young man called Dschemil, and a girl called Dschemila.'

'My name is Dschemil. What does the ogre want with me?'

'He gave me some presents for Dschemila. How can I see her?'

'Come with me, and you shall give them into her own hands.'

So the two went together to the house of Dschemil's uncle, and Dschemil led the Jew into his aunt's room.

'Aunt!' he cried, 'this Jew who is with me has come from the ogre, and has brought with him, as presents, a mirror and a comb which the ogre has sent her.'

'But it may be only some wicked trick on the part of the ogre,' said she.

'Oh, I don't think so,' answered the young man, 'give her the things.'

Then the maiden was called, and she came out of her hiding place, and went up to the Jew, saying, 'Where have you come from, Jew?'

'From your father the ogre.'

'And what errand did he send you on?'

'He told me I was to give you this mirror and this comb, and to say "Look in this mirror, and comb your hair with this comb, and both will become as they were formerly."'

And Dschemila took the mirror and looked into it, and combed her hair with the comb, and she had no longer an ass's head, but the face of a beautiful maiden.

Great was the joy of both mother and cousin at this wonderful sight, and the news that Dschemila had returned soon spread, and the neighbours came flocking in with greetings.

'When did you come back?'

'My cousin brought me.'

'Why, he told us he could not find you!'

'Oh, I did that on purpose,' answered Dschemil. 'I did not want everyone to know.'

Then he turned to his father and his mother, his brothers and his sisters-in-law, and said, 'We must set to work at once, for the wedding will be to-day.'

A beautiful litter was prepared to carry the bride to her new home, but she shrank back, saying, 'I am afraid, lest the ogre should carry me off again.'

'How can the ogre get at you when we are all here?' they said. 'There are two thousand of us all told, and every man has his sword.'

'He will manage it somehow,' answered Dschemila, 'he is a powerful king!'

'She is right,' said an old man. 'Take away the litter, and let her go on foot if she is afraid.'

'But it is absurd!' exclaimed the rest; 'how can the ogre get hold of her?'

'I will not go,' said Dschemila again. 'You do not know that monster; I do.'

And while they were disputing the bridegroom arrived.

'Let her alone. She shall stay in her father's house. After all, I can live here, and the wedding feast shall be made ready.'

And so they were married at last, and died without having had a single quarrel.

[Marehen und Gedichte aus der Stadt Tripolis,]



THE ENCHANTED WREATH

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Orange Fairy Book*, by Various
[Told by a Pathan to Major Campbell.]

Once upon a time there lived near a forest a man and his wife and two girls; one girl was the daughter of the man, and the other the daughter of his wife; and the man's daughter was good and beautiful, but the woman's daughter was cross and ugly. However, her mother did not know that, but thought her the most bewitching maiden that ever was seen.

One day the man called to his daughter and bade her come with him into the forest to cut wood. They worked hard all day, but in spite of the chopping they were very cold, for it rained heavily, and when they returned home, they were wet through. Then, to his vexation, the man found that he had left his axe behind him, and he knew that if it lay all night in the mud it would become rusty and useless. So he said to his wife:

'I have dropped my axe in the forest, bid your daughter go and fetch it, for mine has worked hard all day and is both wet and weary.'

But the wife answered:

'If your daughter is wet already, it is all the more reason that she should go and get the axe. Besides, she is a great strong girl, and a little rain will not hurt her, while my daughter would be sure to catch a bad cold.'

By long experience the man knew there was no good saying any more, and with a sigh he told the poor girl she must return to the forest for the axe.

The walk took some time, for it was very dark, and her shoes often stuck

in the mud, but she was brave as well as beautiful and never thought of turning back merely because the path was both difficult and unpleasant. At last, with her dress torn by brambles that she could not see, and her face scratched by the twigs on the trees, she reached the spot where she and her father had been cutting in the morning, and found the axe in the place he had left it. To her surprise, three little doves were sitting on the handle, all of them looking very sad.

'You poor little things,' said the girl, stroking them. 'Why do you sit there and get wet? Go and fly home to your nest, it will be much warmer than this; but first eat this bread, which I saved from my dinner, and perhaps you will feel happier. It is my father's axe you are sitting on, and I must take it back as fast as I can, or I shall get a terrible scolding from my stepmother.' She then crumbled the bread on the ground, and was pleased to see the doves flutter quite cheerfully towards it.

'Good-bye,' she said, picking up the axe, and went her way homewards.

By the time they had finished all the crumbs the doves felt much better, and were able to fly back to their nest in the top of a tree.

'That is a good girl,' said one; 'I really was too weak to stretch out a wing before she came. I should like to do something to show how grateful I am.'

'Well, let us give her a wreath of flowers that will never fade as long as she wears it,' cried another.

'And let the tiniest singing birds in the world sit amongst the flowers,' rejoined the third.

'Yes, that will do beautifully,' said the first. And when the girl stepped into her cottage a wreath of rosebuds was on her head, and a crowd of little birds were singing unseen.

The father, who was sitting by the fire, thought that, in spite of her muddy clothes, he had never seen his daughter looking so lovely; but the stepmother and the other girl grew wild with envy.

'How absurd to walk about on such a pouring night, dressed up like that,' she remarked crossly, and roughly pulled off the wreath as she spoke, to place it on her own daughter. As she did so the roses became withered and brown, and the birds flew out of the window.

'See what a trumpery thing it is!' cried the stepmother; 'and now take your supper and go to bed, for it is near upon midnight.'

But though she pretended to despise the wreath, she longed none the less for her daughter to have one like it.

Now it happened that the next evening the father, who had been alone in the forest, came back a second time without his axe. The stepmother's heart was glad when she saw this, and she said quite mildly:

'Why, you have forgotten your axe again, you careless man! But now your daughter shall stay at home, and mine shall go and bring it back'; and throwing a cloak over the girl's shoulders, she bade her hasten to the forest.

With a very ill grace the damsel set forth, grumbling to herself as she went; for though she wished for the wreath, she did not at all want the trouble of getting it.

By the time she reached the spot where her stepfather had been cutting the wood the girl was in a very bad temper indeed, and when she caught sight of the axe, there were the three little doves, with drooping heads and soiled, bedraggled feathers, sitting on the handle.

'You dirty creatures,' cried she, 'get away at once, or I will throw stones at you! And the doves spread their wings in a fright and flew up to the very top of a tree, their bodies shaking with anger.

'What shall we do to revenge ourselves on her?' asked the smallest of the doves, 'we were never treated like that before.'

'Never,' said the biggest dove. 'We must find some way of paying her back in her own coin!'

'I know,' answered the middle dove; 'she shall never be able to say anything but "dirty creatures" to the end of her life.'

'Oh, how clever of you! That will do beautifully,' exclaimed the other two. And they flapped their wings and clucked so loud with delight, and made such a noise, that they woke up all the birds in the trees close by.

'What in the world is the matter?' asked the birds sleepily.

'That is our secret,' said the doves.

Meanwhile the girl had reached home crosser than ever; but as soon as her mother heard her lift the latch of the door she ran out to hear her adventures. 'Well, did you get the wreath?' cried she.

'Dirty creatures!' answered her daughter.

'Don't speak to me like that! What do you mean?' asked the mother again.

'Dirty creatures!' repeated the daughter, and nothing else could she say.

Then the woman saw that something evil had befallen her, and turned in her rage to her stepdaughter.

'You are at the bottom of this, I know,' she cried; and as the father was out of the way she took a stick and beat the girl till she screamed with pain and went to bed sobbing.

If the poor girl's life had been miserable before, it was ten times worse now, for the moment her father's back was turned the others teased and tormented her from morning till night; and their fury was increased by the sight of her wreath, which the doves had placed again on her head.

Things went on like this for some weeks, when, one day, as the king's son was riding through the forest, he heard some strange birds singing more sweetly than birds had ever sung before. He tied his horse to a

tree, and followed where the sound led him, and, to his surprise, he saw before him a beautiful girl chopping wood, with a wreath of pink rose-buds, out of which the singing came. Standing in the shelter of a tree, he watched her a long while, and then, hat in hand, he went up and spoke to her.

'Fair maiden, who are you, and who gave you that wreath of singing roses?' asked he, for the birds were so tiny that till you looked closely you never saw them.

'I live in a hut on the edge of the forest,' she answered, blushing, for she had never spoken to a prince before. 'As to the wreath, I know not how it came there, unless it may be the gift of some doves whom I fed when they were starving! The prince was delighted with this answer, which showed the goodness of the girl's heart, and besides he had fallen in love with her beauty, and would not be content till she promised to return with him to the palace, and become his bride. The old king was naturally disappointed at his son's choice of a wife, as he wished him to marry a neighbouring princess; but as from his birth the prince had always done exactly as he like, nothing was said and a splendid wedding feast was got ready.

The day after her marriage the bride sent a messenger, bearing handsome presents to her father, and telling him of the good fortune which had befallen her. As may be imagined, the stepmother and her daughter were so filled with envy that they grew quite ill, and had to take to their beds, and nobody would have been sorry it they had never got up again; but that did not happen. At length, however, they began to feel better, for the mother invented a plan by which she could be revenged on the girl who had never done her any harm.

Her plan was this. In the town where she had lived before she was married there was an old witch, who had more skill in magic than any other witch she knew. To this witch she would go and beg her to make her a mask with the face of her stepdaughter, and when she had the mask the rest would be easy. She told her daughter what she meant to do, and although the daughter could only say 'dirty creatures,' in answer, she nodded and smiled and looked well pleased.

Everything fell out exactly as the woman had hoped. By the aid of her magic mirror the witch beheld the new princess walking in her gardens in a dress of green silk, and in a few minutes had produced a mask so like her, that very few people could have told the difference. However, she counselled the woman that when her daughter first wore it--for that, of course, was what she intended her to do--she had better pretend that she had a toothache, and cover her head with a lace veil. The woman thanked her and paid her well, and returned to her hut, carrying the mask under her cloak.

In a few days she heard that a great hunt was planned, and the prince would leave the palace very early in the morning, so that his wife would be alone all day. This was a chance not to be missed, and taking her daughter with her she went up to the palace, where she had never been before. The princess was too happy in her new home to remember all that she had suffered in the old one, and she welcomed them both gladly, and gave them quantities of beautiful things to take back with them. At last she took them down to the shore to see a pleasure boat which her husband had had made for her; and here, the woman seizing her opportunity, stole softly behind the girl and pushed her off the rock on which she was standing, into the deep water, where she instantly sank to the bottom. Then she fastened the mask on her daughter, flung over her shoulders a velvet cloak, which the princess had let fall, and finally arranged a lace veil over her head.

'Rest your cheek on your hand, as if you were in pain, when the prince returns,' said the mother; 'and be careful not to speak, whatever you do. I will go back to the witch and see if she cannot take off the spell laid on you by those horrible birds. Ah! why did I not think of it before!'

No sooner had the prince entered the palace than he hastened to the princess's apartments, where he found her lying on the sofa apparently in great pain.

'My dearest wife, what is the matter with you?' he cried, kneeling down beside her, and trying to take her hand; but she snatched it away, and pointing to her cheek murmured something he could not catch.

'What is it? tell me! Is the pain bad? When did it begin? Shall I send for your ladies to bath the place?' asked the prince, pouring out these and a dozen other questions, to which the girl only shook her head.

'But I can't leave you like this,' he continued, starting up, 'I must summon all the court physicians to apply soothing balsams to the sore place! And as he spoke he sprang to his feet to go in search of them once came near her the trick would at once be discovered, that she forgot her mother's counsel not to speak, and forgot even the spell that had been laid upon her, and catching hold of the prince's tunic, she cried in tones of entreaty: 'Dirty creatures!'

The young man stopped, not able to believe his ears, but supposed that pain had made the princess cross, as it sometimes does. However, he guessed somehow that she wished to be left alone, so he only said:

'Well, I dare say a little sleep will do you good, if you can manage to get it, and that you will wake up better to-morrow.'

Now, that night happened to be very hot and airless, and the prince, after vainly trying to rest, at length got up and went to the window. Suddenly he beheld in the moonlight a form with a wreath of roses on her head rise out of the sea below him and step on to the sands, holding out her arms as she did so towards the palace.

'That maiden is strangely like my wife,' thought he; 'I must see her closer! And he hastened down to the water. But when he got there, the princess, for she indeed it was, had disappeared completely, and he began to wonder if his eyes had deceived him.

The next morning he went to the false bride's room, but her ladies told him she would neither speak nor get up, though she ate everything they set before her. The prince was sorely perplexed as to what could be the matter with her, for naturally he could not guess that she was expecting her mother to return every moment, and to remove the spell the doves had laid upon her, and meanwhile was afraid to speak lest she should betray herself. At length he made up his mind to summon all the court physicians; he did not tell her what he was going to do, lest it should make her worse, but he went himself and begged the four learned

leeches attached to the king's person to follow him to the princess's apartments. Unfortunately, as they entered, the princess was so enraged at the sight of them that she forgot all about the doves, and shrieked out: 'Dirty creatures! dirty creatures!' which so offended the physicians that they left the room at once, and nothing that the prince could say would prevail on them to remain. He then tried to persuade his wife to send them a message that she was sorry for her rudeness, but not a word would she say.

Late that evening, when he had performed all the tiresome duties which fall to the lot of every prince, the young man was leaning out of his window, refreshing himself with the cool breezes that blew off the sea. His thoughts went back to the scene of the morning, and he wondered if, after all, he had not made a great mistake in marrying a low-born wife, however beautiful she might be. How could he have imagined that the quiet, gentle girl who had been so charming a companion to him during the first days of their marriage, could have become in a day the rude, sulky woman, who could not control her temper even to benefit herself. One thing was clear, if she did not change her conduct very shortly he would have to send her away from court.

He was thinking these thoughts, when his eyes fell on the sea beneath him, and there, as before, was the figure that so closely resembled his wife, standing with her feet in the water, holding out her arms to him.

'Wait for me! Wait for me! Wait for me!' he cried; not even knowing he was speaking. But when he reached the shore there was nothing to be seen but the shadows cast by the moonlight.

A state ceremonial in a city some distance off caused the prince to ride away at daybreak, and he left without seeing his wife again.

'Perhaps she may have come to her senses by to-morrow,' said he to himself; 'and, anyhow, if I am going to send her back to her father, it might be better if we did not meet in the meantime! Then he put the matter from his mind, and kept his thoughts on the duty that lay before him.

It was nearly midnight before he returned to the palace, but, instead

of entering, he went down to the shore and hid behind a rock. He had scarcely done so when the girl came out of the sea, and stretched out her arms towards his window. In an instant the prince had seized her hand, and though she made a frightened struggle to reach the water--for she in her turn had had a spell laid upon her--he held her fast.

'You are my own wife, and I shall never let you go,' he said. But the words were hardly out of his mouth when he found that it was a hare that he was holding by the paw. Then the hare changed into a fish, and the fish into a bird, and the bird into a slimy wriggling snake. This time the prince's hand nearly opened of itself, but with a strong effort he kept his fingers shut, and drawing his sword cut off its head, when the spell was broken, and the girl stood before him as he had seen her first, the wreath upon her head and the birds singing for joy.

The very next morning the stepmother arrived at the palace with an ointment that the old witch had given her to place upon her daughter's tongue, which would break the dove's spell, if the rightful bride had really been drowned in the sea; if not, then it would be useless. The mother assured her that she had seen her stepdaughter sink, and that there was no fear that she would ever come up again; but, to make all quite safe, the old woman might bewitch the girl; and so she did. After that the wicked stepmother travelled all through the night to get to the palace as soon as possible, and made her way straight into her daughter's room.

'I have got it! I have got it!' she cried triumphantly, and laid the ointment on her daughter's tongue.

'Now what do you say?' she asked proudly.

'Dirty creatures! dirty creatures!' answered the daughter; and the mother wrung her hands and wept, as she knew that all her plans had failed.

At this moment the prince entered with his real wife. 'You both deserved death,' he said, 'and if it were left to me, you should have it. But the princess has begged me to spare your lives, so you will be put into a ship and carried off to a desert island, where you will stay till you

die.'

Then the ship was made ready and the wicked woman and her daughter were placed in it, and it sailed away, and no more was heard of them. But the prince and his wife lived together long and happily, and ruled their people well.



THE FARMER AND THE BADGER

The Project Gutenberg Etext of *Japanese Fairy Tales*, by Yei Theodora Ozaki

Long, long ago, there lived an old farmer and his wife who had made their home in the mountains, far from any town. Their only neighbor was a bad and malicious badger. This badger used to come out every night and run across to the farmer's field and spoil the vegetables and the rice which the farmer spent his time in carefully cultivating. The badger at last grew so ruthless in his mischievous work, and did so much harm everywhere on the farm, that the good-natured farmer could not stand it any longer, and determined to put a stop to it. So he lay in wait day after day and night after night, with a big club, hoping to catch the badger, but all in vain. Then he laid traps for the wicked animal.

The farmer's trouble and patience was rewarded, for one fine day on going his rounds he found the badger caught in a hole he had dug for that purpose. The farmer was delighted at having caught his enemy, and carried him home securely bound with rope. When he reached the house the farmer said to his wife:

"I have at last caught the bad badger. You must keep an eye on him while I am out at work and not let him escape, because I want to make him into soup to-night."

Saying this, he hung the badger up to the rafters of his storehouse and went out to his work in the fields. The badger was in great

distress, for he did not at all like the idea of being made into soup that night, and he thought and thought for a long time, trying to hit upon some plan by which he might escape. It was hard to think clearly in his uncomfortable position, for he had been hung upside down. Very near him, at the entrance to the storehouse, looking out towards the green fields and the trees and the pleasant sunshine, stood the farmer's old wife pounding barley. She looked tired and old. Her face was seamed with many wrinkles, and was as brown as leather, and every now and then she stopped to wipe the perspiration which rolled down her face.

"Dear lady," said the wily badger, "you must be very weary doing such heavy work in your old age. Won't you let me do that for you? My arms are very strong, and I could relieve you for a little while!"

"Thank you for your kindness," said the old woman, "but I cannot let you do this work for me because I must not untie you, for you might escape if I did, and my husband would be very angry if he came home and found you gone."

Now, the badger is one of the most cunning of animals, and he said again in a very sad, gentle, voice:

"You are very unkind. You might untie me, for I promise not to try to escape. If you are afraid of your husband, I will let you bind me again before his return when I have finished pounding the barley. I am so tired and sore tied up like this. If you would only let me down for a few minutes I would indeed be thankful!"

The old woman had a good and simple nature, and could not think badly of any one. Much less did she think that the badger was only deceiving her in order to get away. She felt sorry, too, for the animal as she turned to look at him. He looked in such a sad plight hanging downwards from the ceiling by his legs, which were all tied together so tightly that the rope and the knots were cutting into the skin. So in the kindness of her heart, and believing the creature's promise that he would not run away, she untied the cord and let him down.

The old woman then gave him the wooden pestle and told him to do the work for a short time while she rested. He took the pestle, but instead of doing the work as he was told, the badger at once sprang upon the old woman and knocked her down with the heavy piece of wood. He then killed her and cut her up and made soup of her, and waited for the return of the old farmer. The old man worked hard in his fields all day, and as he worked he thought with pleasure that no more now would his labor be spoiled by the destructive badger.

Towards sunset he left his work and turned to go home. He was very tired, but the thought of the nice supper of hot badger soup awaiting his return cheered him. The thought that the badger might get free and take revenge on the poor old woman never once came into his mind.

The badger meanwhile assumed the old woman's form, and as soon as he saw the old farmer approaching came out to greet him on the veranda of the little house, saying:

"So you have come back at last. I have made the badger soup and have been waiting for you for a long time."

The old farmer quickly took off his straw sandals and sat down before his tiny dinner-tray. The innocent man never even dreamed that it was not his wife but the badger who was waiting upon him, and asked at once for the soup. Then the badger suddenly transformed himself back to his natural form and cried out:

"You wife-eating old man! Look out for the bones in the kitchen!"

Laughing loudly and derisively he escaped out of the house and ran away to his den in the hills. The old man was left behind alone. He could hardly believe what he had seen and heard. Then when he understood the whole truth he was so scared and horrified that he fainted right away. After a while he came round and burst into tears. He cried loudly and bitterly. He rocked himself to and fro in his hopeless grief. It seemed too terrible to be real that his faithful old wife had been killed and cooked by the badger while he

was working quietly in the fields, knowing nothing of what was going on at home, and congratulating himself on having once for all got rid of the wicked animal who had so often spoiled his fields. And oh! the horrible thought; he had very nearly drunk the soup which the creature had made of his poor old woman. "Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear!" he wailed aloud. Now, not far away there lived in the same mountain a kind, good-natured old rabbit. He heard the old man crying and sobbing and at once set out to see what was the matter, and if there was anything he could do to help his neighbor. The old man told him all that had happened. When the rabbit heard the story he was very angry at the wicked and deceitful badger, and told the old man to leave everything to him and he would avenge his wife's death. The farmer was at last comforted, and, wiping away his tears, thanked the rabbit for his goodness in coming to him in his distress.

The rabbit, seeing that the farmer was growing calmer, went back to his home to lay his plans for the punishment of the badger.

The next day the weather was fine, and the rabbit went out to find the badger. He was not to be seen in the woods or on the hillside or in the fields anywhere, so the rabbit went to his den and found the badger hiding there, for the animal had been afraid to show himself ever since he had escaped from the farmer's house, for fear of the old man's wrath.

The rabbit called out:

"Why are you not out on such a beautiful day? Come out with me, and we will go and cut grass on the hills together."

The badger, never doubting but that the rabbit was his friend, willingly consented to go out with him, only too glad to get away from the neighborhood of the farmer and the fear of meeting him. The rabbit led the way miles away from their homes, out on the hills where the grass grew tall and thick and sweet. They both set to work to cut down as much as they could carry home, to store it up for their winter's food. When they had each cut down all they wanted they tied it in bundles and then started homewards, each carrying

his bundle of grass on his back. This time the rabbit made the badger go first.

When they had gone a little way the rabbit took out a flint and steel, and, striking it over the badger's back as he stepped along in front, set his bundle of grass on fire. The badger heard the flint striking, and asked:

"What is that noise. 'Crack, crack'?"

"Oh, that is nothing." replied the rabbit; "I only said 'Crack, crack' because this mountain is called Crackling Mountain."

The fire soon spread in the bundle of dry grass on the badger's back. The badger, hearing the crackle of the burning grass, asked, "What is that?"

"Now we have come to the 'Burning Mountain,'" answered the rabbit.

By this time the bundle was nearly burned out and all the hair had been burned off the badger's back. He now knew what had happened by the smell of the smoke of the burning grass. Screaming with pain the badger ran as fast as he could to his hole. The rabbit followed and found him lying on his bed groaning with pain.

"What an unlucky fellow you are!" said the rabbit. "I can't imagine how this happened! I will bring you some medicine which will heal your back quickly!"

The rabbit went away glad and smiling to think that the punishment upon the badger had already begun. He hoped that the badger would die of his burns, for he felt that nothing could be too bad for the animal, who was guilty of murdering a poor helpless old woman who had trusted him. He went home and made an ointment by mixing some sauce and red pepper together.

He carried this to the badger, but before putting it on he told him that it would cause him great pain, but that he must bear it patiently, because it was a very wonderful medicine for burns and

scalds and such wounds. The badger thanked him and begged him to apply it at once. But no language can describe the agony of the badger as soon as the red pepper had been pasted all over his sore back. He rolled over and over and howled loudly. The rabbit, looking on, felt that the farmer's wife was beginning to be avenged.

The badger was in bed for about a month; but at last, in spite of the red pepper application, his burns healed and he got well. When the rabbit saw that the badger was getting well, he thought of another plan by which he could compass the creature's death. So he went one day to pay the badger a visit and to congratulate him on his recovery.

During the conversation the rabbit mentioned that he was going fishing, and described how pleasant fishing was when the weather was fine and the sea smooth.

The badger listened with pleasure to the rabbit's account of the way he passed his time now, and forgot all his pains and his month's illness, and thought what fun it would be if he could go fishing too; so he asked the rabbit if he would take him the next time he went out to fish. This was just what the rabbit wanted, so he agreed.

Then he went home and built two boats, one of wood and the other of clay. At last they were both finished, and as the rabbit stood and looked at his work he felt that all his trouble would be well rewarded if his plan succeeded, and he could manage to kill the wicked badger now.

The day came when the rabbit had arranged to take the badger fishing. He kept the wooden boat himself and gave the badger the clay boat. The badger, who knew nothing about boats, was delighted with his new boat and thought how kind it was of the rabbit to give it to him. They both got into their boats and set out. After going some distance from the shore the rabbit proposed that they should try their boats and see which one could go the quickest. The badger fell in with the proposal, and they both set to work to row as fast as they could for some time. In the middle of the race the badger

found his boat going to pieces, for the water now began to soften the clay. He cried out in great fear to the rabbit to help him. But the rabbit answered that he was avenging the old woman's murder, and that this had been his intention all along, and that he was happy to think that the badger had at last met his deserts for all his evil crimes, and was to drown with no one to help him. Then he raised his oar and struck at the badger with all his strength till he fell with the sinking clay boat and was seen no more.

Thus at last he kept his promise to the old farmer. The rabbit now turned and rowed shorewards, and having landed and pulled his boat upon the beach, hurried back to tell the old farmer everything, and how the badger, his enemy, had been killed.

The old farmer thanked him with tears in his eyes. He said that till now he could never sleep at night or be at peace in the daytime, thinking of how his wife's death was unavenged, but from this time he would be able to sleep and eat as of old. He begged the rabbit to stay with him and share his home, so from this day the rabbit went to stay with the old farmer and they both lived together as good friends to the end of their days.



THE GREEDY FLY.

A FABLE.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Diving Bell*, by Francis C. Woodworth

A fly, who was a great lover of sweet things, came across a cup full of molasses. He alighted on the edge of the cup, and commenced sipping the molasses. It pleased him very much. He thought he had never tasted anything so good before. At length, beginning to be surfeited with his dinner, instead of flying away, and going about his business, until he should be hungry again, he plunged into the molasses, so as to

enjoy as much of it as he could.

Mistaken fly! He fared very much as you might suppose he would. He lost his life in the molasses.

MORAL.

That is just the way with thousands, who have fewer legs and ought to have more brains than this fly. They are not content with a right and proper use of the good things which God has given them. They plunge into a sea of pleasure, so as to enjoy as much of it as they possibly can. But such a surfeit, instead of increasing the enjoyment, makes them miserable. They are drowned in the midst of their pleasures.



THE HIND OF THE WOOD

The Project Gutenberg EBook of Edmund Dulac's Fairy-Book, by Edmund Dulac

A FRENCH FAIRY TALE

Once upon a time there lived a King and a Queen whose marriage was as happy as happy could be; they loved each other tenderly, and, in turn, their subjects loved them; but one thing clouded their life: and that was that they had no children, no heir. The Queen thought that the King would love her much more if she had a child. So she made up her mind to drink of the water of a certain spring. People came there in thousands from afar to drink of this special kind of water; and one saw so many that it looked as though all the world and his wife were there.

Now there were many, many lovely fountains in the wood where the Queen and other people went to drink at the spring; so the Queen asked her ladies to lead the others away to these fountains to amuse themselves, and leave her alone. Then, when they had all withdrawn, she bewailed in

a plaintive voice.

'Am I not unhappy,' she said, 'to have no children! The poor women, who can badly afford them, have plenty; but here it is now five years that I have begged heaven to give me one. Oh! am I to die without ever having a little child? Never! Never! Nev----'

She broke off suddenly, for she saw that the water of the fountain was troubled. Then a big Crayfish came up and climbed on to the bank and spoke to her:

'Great Queen, you shall have your desire. Near here is the grand palace which the fairies built, but it is impossible for you to find it, because it is surrounded by strong fairy barricades, through which no mortal eye could ever see, nor mortal footstep pass without a guide. But I am your humble servant, and, if you will trust yourself to me, I will take you there.'

The Queen listened without interrupting, for hearing a big Crayfish talk--and talk so nicely too--was a great surprise to her. But there was a still greater surprise in store. The Crayfish waved its feelers in the air, and, before she could count three, it had taken the form of a beautiful little old woman, with pretty snow-white hair and a dainty shepherdess costume. She bowed low, and then spoke.

'Well, madam,' said she, 'always look upon me as one of your friends, for I wish nothing but what would be for your good.'

She was so sweet and charming that the Queen kissed her, and then by common consent they went off hand in hand through the wood by a way which surprised the Queen.

It was the way by which the fairies came from the palace to the fountains. As they went the Queen paused to look at a strange thing which made her heart beat very fast. At a certain spot the bushes overhead were full of roses and orange blossoms, entwined and laced in such a way as to form a cradle covered with leaves. The earth beneath was a carpet of violets, and, in the giant cedars above, thousands of little birds, each one a different colour, sang their songs; and the

meaning of their melody was this: that cradle, woven by fairy fingers, was not there for nothing.

The Queen had not got over this surprise before she saw in the distance a castle that dazzled her vision, so splendid did it shine. To tell the truth, the walls and the ceilings were of nothing but diamonds, and all the benches--even the balcony and terraces--all were pure diamonds scintillating with flashes beyond the strength of human eyes to bear. The Queen gave a great cry of joy as she covered her eyes with her hand. Then, as they came to the gate of the castle, she asked the little old woman if what she saw were real, or if she were dreaming?

'Nothing is more real, madam,' the fairy replied. And at that moment the door of the castle opened and six other fairies came out. But what fairies! They were the most beautiful ever seen. They all made a low bow to the Queen, and each one presented her with a branch flowering with petals of precious stones, to make herself a bouquet. One bore roses, another tulips, another rare wild-flowers, and the rest budded with carnations and pomegranates.

'Madam,' they said, 'we could not give you a greater mark of our friendship for you, than to invite you here. We are pleased to be able to tell you that you shall have a lovely little Princess whom you shall call Désirée. Be sure not to forget that, when she is born, you summon us, because we wish to endow her with all the good qualities possible. All you will have to do is to take the branches of the bouquet, and, in naming each flower, think of the fairy of that name; rest assured that we shall be in your room immediately.'

The Queen, full of joy, threw her arms around each one's neck in turn, and kissed them all, over and over again, for half an hour. After that they begged the Queen to go through their palace, and the diamonds were so bright that the Queen could not keep her eyes open. Then they took her through their garden. Never was there such lovely fruit; the apricots were larger than her head, and she could only eat a quarter of one, and the taste was so lovely that the Queen resolved never to eat anything else as long as she lived. She remained in the palace until the evening, and then, having thanked the fairies for all they had done for her, she returned with the Fairy of the Fountain.

Now, when the Queen went home, she found that they were all very upset, and had been searching for her, and could not think where she had gone. Some had thought that, as she was so beautiful and young, some stranger had taken her away: which was reasonable, for she spoke so nicely to every one. But now at last they had found her, and the King was himself again.

The Queen soon found that what the fairies had said was true. On a certain day she had a little daughter, and she called her Désirée. Then, remembering their words, she at once took the bouquet and named each flower and thought of the fairies one after the other, and lo! immediately they were all there. Their arms were crammed full of presents. And, after they had kissed the Queen and the little Princess, they began to distribute the presents. There was beautiful lace with the history of the world worked into it; then came a lovely cover all marked in gold representing all the toys that children play with. The cot was then shown, and the Queen went into raptures over it: it surely was the nicest ever made; it was of beautiful, rare wood, with a canopy of blue silk, inwrought with diamonds and rubies.

Then the fairies took the little Princess on their knees, and kissed her and hugged her because she was so good and beautiful. Each fairy wished her a good quality. One wished her to be wise; another wished that she might be good; another wished her to be virtuous; another to be beautiful; another to possess a good fortune; and the fifth asked for her a long life and good health. Then came the last, and she wished that Désirée might obtain all that she herself could ever wish for.

The Queen thanked them a hundred times for all the good things they had given her little daughter, and, while she was doing so, all gave a sudden start, for the door opened and a tremendous Crayfish--so large that it could hardly get through the door--came in, waving its feelers in the air.

'O ungrateful Queen!' said the Crayfish, 'you did not trouble to ask me here. Is it possible that you have so soon forgotten the Fairy of the Fountain and the good services I did in taking you to my sisters. Why, you have invited all of them, and I am the only one forgotten.'

The Queen was terribly upset at her error, and begged the Fairy to forgive her. She hastened to assure her that she had not for a moment forgotten her great obligation to her; and she begged her not to go back on her friendship, and particularly to be good to the little Princess.

The others thought that the Fairy of the Fountain would wish evil to the baby Princess, so they said to her: 'Dear sister, do not be cross with the Queen; she is good and never would offend you.'

Now, as the Fairy of the Fountain liked to be spoken to nicely, this softened her a little, and she said:

'Very well, I will not wish her all the harm I was going to; I will lessen it a little. But take care that she never sees the light of day until she is fifteen, or she and you will have reason to regret it. That is all I have to say.' Then, suddenly changing into the little old woman with the white hair and shepherdess dress, she pirouetted through the wall, staff in hand. And the cries of the Queen and the prayers of the good fairies did not matter a bit.

The Queen begged the other fairies to avert the terrible catastrophe, and besought them to tell her what to do. They consulted together, and at last told the Queen that they would build a palace without any windows or doors, and with an underground passage, so that the Princess's food could be brought to her. And she was to be kept there until she was fifteen.

Then, with a wave of their wands, they made a lovely, pure-white marble castle spring up, and, inside of this, all the chairs were made of jewels, and even the floors were no different. And here the little Princess dwelt and grew up a good and beautiful child, possessing all the good qualities that her fairy godmothers had wished for her; and from time to time they came to see how she was getting on. But, of all the fairy godmothers, Tulip was the favourite. She reminded the Queen never to forget the warning not to allow the Princess to see the light of day, lest the terrible fate that the Fairy of the Fountain had laid upon her would surely come to pass. The Queen, of course, promised never to forget so important a matter.

Now, just as her little daughter was nearing the age of fifteen, the Queen had her portrait taken and sent to all the great courts of the world. And so it happened that one Prince, when he saw it, took it and shut it up in his cabinet and talked to the portrait as though it was the Princess herself in the flesh.

The courtiers heard him and went and told his father that his son had gone mad, and that he was shut up in his room, talking all day long to something or somebody who wasn't there.

The King immediately sent for his son and told him what the courtiers had said about him; then he asked him if it was true, and what had come over him to act like this.

The Prince thought this a favourable opportunity, so he threw himself at the feet of the King and said:

'You have resolved, sire, to marry me to the Black Princess, but I love the Princess Désirée.'

'You have not seen her,' said the King. 'How can you love her?'

'Neither have I seen the Black Princess, but I have both their portraits,' replied the Warrior Prince (he was so named because he had won three great battles), 'but I assure you that I have such a love for the Princess Désirée, that if you do not withdraw your word to the Black Princess and allow me to have Désirée, I shall die, and I shall be very glad to do so if I am unable to have the Princess I love.'

'It is to her portrait, then, that you have been speaking?' said the King. 'My son, you have made yourself the laughing-stock of the whole court. They think you are mad.'

'You would be as much struck as I am if you saw her portrait,' replied the Prince firmly.

'Fetch it and show it to me, then,' said the King, equally firmly.

The Prince went, and returned with the Princess's portrait as requested; and the King was so struck with her beauty that he gave the Prince leave there and then to marry her, and promised to withdraw his word from the other Princess.

'My dear Warrior,' said he, 'I should love to have so beautiful a Princess in my court.'

The Prince kissed his father's hand and bowed his knee, for he could not conceal his joy. He begged the King to send a messenger not only to the Black Princess but also to Princess Désirée; and he hoped that in regard to his own Princess, he would choose a man who would prove the most capable; and he must be rich, because this was a special occasion and called for all the elaborate preparation it was possible to show in such a diplomatic mission.

The King's choice fell on Prince Becafigue; he was a young Prince who spoke eloquently, and he possessed five millions of money. And, beside this, he loved the Warrior Prince very dearly.

When the messenger was taking his leave the Prince said to him:

'Do not forget, my dear Becafigue, that my life depends on my marrying Princess Désirée, whom you are going to see. Do your best for me and tell the Princess that I love her.' Then he handed Becafigue his photograph to give the Princess.

The young Prince Becafigue's cortège was so grand, and consisted of so many carriages, that it took them twenty-three hours to pass; and the whole world turned out to see him enter the gates of the palace where the King and Queen and Princess Désirée lived. The King and Queen saw him coming and were very pleased with all his grandeur, and commanded that he should be received in a manner befitting so great a personage.

Becafigue was taken before the King and Queen, and, after paying his respects to them, told them his message and asked to be introduced to the Princess Désirée. What was his surprise on being refused!

'I am very sorry to have to say no to your request, Prince Becafigue,'

said the King, 'but I will tell you why. On the day the Princess was born a fairy took an aversion to her, and said that a great misfortune should befall her if she saw the light of day before she was fifteen years of age.'

'And am I to return without her?' said Becafigue. 'Here is a portrait of the Warrior Prince.' Then, as he was handing it to the King, and was about to say something further about it, a voice came from the photograph, speaking with loving tones:

'Dear Désirée, you cannot imagine with what joy I wait for you: come soon to our court, where your beauty will grace it as no other court will ever be graced.'

The portrait said nothing more, and the King and the Queen were so surprised that they asked Becafigue to allow them to show it to the Princess.

Becafigue readily assented and the Queen took the portrait to the Princess and showed it to her; and the Princess was delighted. Although the Queen had told her nothing, the Princess knew that it meant a great marriage, and was not surprised when her mother asked: 'Would you be cross if you had to marry this man?'

'Madam,' said the Princess, 'it is not for me to choose; I shall be pleased to obey whatever you wish.'

'But,' said the Queen, 'if my choice should fall on this particular Prince, would you consider yourself happy?'

The Princess blushed and turned her eyes away and said nothing; then the Queen took her in her arms and kissed her, for she loved the Princess very much and knew that she would soon lose her, for it wanted only three months to her fifteenth birthday.

When the Prince knew that he could not have his dear Princess Désirée until three months had passed, he became very sad, and could not sleep at night, until at last his strength gave way and he was near to death. Doctors were called in, but they could do nothing at all, and the King

was in a dreadful state, for he loved his son very much.

Now the other messenger, who was sent to the Black Princess to tell her that the Prince had changed his mind and was going to marry another, was admitted to her presence and soon explained his errand.

'Mr. Messenger,' she said when he had finished, 'is it possible that your master does not think I am beautiful or rich enough? Look out over my broad lands and you will find that they are so vast that you cannot see where they end; and, as for money, I have large coffers full to the brim, as any one will tell you.'

'Madam,' replied the messenger, 'I blame my master as much as a humble subject may. Now if I were sitting on the greatest throne in the world, I would think it the highest favour from heaven if you would share it with me.'

'That speech has saved your life,' said the Black Princess, 'you may go.'

When the Fairy of the Fountain heard this she was extremely angry and she looked in her book to make sure that the Warrior Prince had really left the Black Princess in favour of the Princess Désirée. Yes, it was quite true.

'What!' cried the Fairy of the Fountain, 'this ill-omened Désirée is always in some way upsetting my plans. No! I will not allow it to happen: why should I?'

Now the messenger Becafigue hurried along to the court of Désirée's father and mother, and threw himself at their feet, and told them that his master was very ill and likely to die if he did not see the Princess.

The King and Queen agreed that it would be best to go and tell the Princess about the Prince; so the Queen went and told her daughter all she knew, not forgetting to mention the evil wish that had been laid upon her at the time of her birth. But the Princess asked her mother if it were not possible to defeat this wish by taking steps to send her to

the Prince in a carriage with all the light shut out.

This was agreed upon and a carriage was made on a subtle plan, with a separate compartment for the Princess, and mouse-trap blinds through which food and drink could be inserted without admitting the light of day. In this she, with her two ladies-in-waiting, Long-Epine and Giroflée, set forth, and all the court wept together with the King and Queen at the going away of their little Princess.

Now Long-Epine did not care for Désirée very much, and, what is more, she loved the Warrior Prince, having seen his photograph and heard him speak.

The Queen's last words at parting were:

'Take care of my little daughter, and do not on any account let her see the light of day. I have made all arrangements with the Prince that she is to be shut up in a room where she will not be able to see the light, and every care will be taken.' And, with these words in their ears, they set off, having promised the Queen that all would be done as she wished.

Long-Epine told herself she would never let the Princess win the Warrior Prince, not if she could prevent it; so, at dinner time that day, when the sun was at its highest, she went as usual to the carriage with the Princess's food, and, with a big knife, slit the blind so that the light streamed in. No sooner had she done so than a strange thing happened. The Princess had been quite alone in the darkened compartment; then how was it that a white hind leapt out through the window and sped away into the forest? Long-Epine watched it, wondering. Then she looked in at the window, but the compartment was empty. The Princess had gone!

Immediately the Princess, in the form of a white hind, had disappeared into the forest, her good friend Giroflée began to chase after her. As soon as she had gone, Long-Epine took the clothes of her mistress and dressed herself up in them, and resolved to impersonate the Princess before the young Prince. Then the carriage drove on, and in it sat Long-Epine disguised as the Princess.

When they arrived she presented herself as Désirée; but the Prince looked at her with horror, for she was not at all like a real Princess. Désirée's dress, which she wore, came to her knees, and she had not noticed that her ugly legs showed below the dress.

'This is not the Princess of the portrait,' said the Prince and his father together. 'You took us for fools, no doubt!'

The false Princess said that it was a terrible thing to bring her away from her kingdom to be treated in this way, and to break the word that they had given. 'How can you do this?' she cried.

At this the Prince and his father were so angry that they did not reply at all, but simply had the false Princess clapped in irons and put into prison.

The Prince was so heart-broken at this new trouble that he resolved to go and shut himself up for the remainder of his life, alone. At once he summoned the faithful Becafigue, and told him all. Then he wrote a letter to his father and sent it by Becafigue.

'If I never see my real Princess again,' he wrote, 'I beg of you that at least you will keep that sham one locked up, and guard her close.'

Now all this time the Princess was in the wood, running hither and thither as hinds do. Once or twice she looked at herself in the water of the fountain, and saw herself so changed that she cried out: 'Is it I? Am I this hind?' Then at last she got very hungry, and began to eat berries and herbs, and finally sought a quiet spot and went to sleep.

The Fairy Tulip had always loved the Princess, and said that if she left the castle before she was fifteen, she was sure that the Fairy of the Fountain would relent and do her no harm. But, as for Giroflée, she was all this time wandering round looking for the little Princess. She had walked so much and now felt so tired that she lay down and went to sleep in the forest. The next morning the Princess, seeking moss among the ferns, found her. When she saw that it was Giroflée, she went up to her and caressed her with her nozzle, as hinds do, and looked into her eyes until at last Giroflée knew full well that it was the Princess turned

into a White Hind. She watched the Hind attentively and saw two large tears fall from her eyes, and then there was not a single doubt that it was her dear little Princess; so she put her arms around her neck, and they wept together.

Then Giroflée told the Princess that she would never leave her, and that she would stay with her until the end.

The Hind understood, and, to show her gratitude, took Giroflée into the very deepest part of the forest to find her some luscious fruit which she had seen there; but on the way Giroflée called out in alarm: she would die of fright if she had to spend the night in such a desolate spot; and then they both began to cry. Their cries were so pitiful that they touched the heart of the good Fairy Tulip, and she came to their aid.

Giroflée begged her to have pity on her young mistress, and to give her back her natural form, but the Fairy Tulip said that it was impossible to do that. She said that she would do what she could. She told Giroflée that if she went into the forest, she would come to the hut of an old woman. She was to speak her fair and ask her to take charge of both of them. Then when night came, the Princess would change back into her natural form; but as this could only happen at night in the hut, they must be very careful.

Now Giroflée thanked the fairy and went, as she had told her, far into the wood; and there, sure enough, she saw a hut and an old woman sitting outside on a bench. She went up to her at once.

'My dear mother,' she said, 'will you allow me to have a little room in your house for myself and my little Hind?'

'Yes, my dear daughter,' she replied, 'I will certainly give you a room.' And she immediately took them into the hut, and then into the dearest little room it was possible to find. It contained two little beds all draped in pure white and beautifully clean.

As the night began to come in, Désirée changed her form and became the Princess again; and, seeing this, Giroflée kissed her and hugged her

with delight. The old woman knocked at the door, and, without entering, she handed Giroflée some fresh fruit which they were very pleased to have to eat; and then they went to bed. But, as soon as day dawned, Désirée took again the shape and form of a White Hind.

Now Becafigue was in the very same wood, and came to the hut where the old woman lived. He begged her to give him something for his master to eat; but the old woman told him that if his master spent the night in the forest, harm would surely happen to him, because it was full of wild animals. Why should he not come to her hut? Why should he not accept the little room she could offer him? He was welcome to it and a good meal besides.

Then Becafigue went back and told the Prince all that the old woman had said and persuaded him to accept her offer. They put the Prince into the room next to the Princess, but neither of them knew anything of this arrangement.

The next morning the Prince called Becafigue, and told him that he was going into the forest and that he was not to follow him. The Prince had walked and walked for a long time in the forest, grieving over his loss, when suddenly in the distance he saw a lovely little White Hind, and gave chase and tried to catch it. The Hind, who was no other than the little Princess, ran and ran far away until the Prince, in utter fatigue, gave up the chase; but he resolved to look again the next day, and to be more careful this time, so as not to let the Hind get away. Then he went home and told the story to Becafigue, while the Princess on her side was telling her dear Giroflée that a young hunter had chased her and tried to kill her, but she was so fleet-footed that she got away.

Giroflée told her not to go out any more, but to stay in and read some books that she would find for her; but, after a little thought, the Princess found it too awful to be shut up in one little room all day long, so the next morning she went out again into the forest, and wandered through the beautiful dells and glades. After going some distance she saw a young hunter lying down on the mossy bank asleep, and, approaching him cautiously, she found that she was now so very close to him that it would be impossible to get away before he awoke.

Then again, he was so handsome, that, instead of running away, she rubbed her little nose against the young hunter. What was her surprise to see that it was her dear Prince! for he, at her caress, opened his eyes, and she at once recognised him. And when he jumped up and stroked and patted her, she trembled with delight and raised her beautiful eyes to his in the dumb eloquence of love.

'Ah! little White Hind,' said he, 'if you only knew how miserable I am, and what the cause of it is, you would not envy me! I love you, little Hind, and I will take care of you and look after you.' And with this he went farther into the forest to find some green herbs for her.

Now the Hind with a sudden fright found its heels again, and, just because she wanted so much to stay, she bounded off as fast as she could go, and never stopped till she reached home, where in great excitement she told Giroflée all that had happened.

The Prince, when he returned and found that the Hind had disappeared, went back also to the hut, and told the old woman that the Hind had deserted him just when he had been so very kind to it and had gone in search of food for it. The Warrior Prince then explained to Becafigue that it was only to see the little Hind that he had remained so long, and that on the morrow he would depart and go away. But he did not.

The Princess in the meantime resolved to go a long way into the forest on the morrow, so as to miss the Prince; but he guessed her little trick, and so the next day he did the same as she. Then, suddenly, in the distance he saw the Hind so plainly that he let fly an arrow to attract its attention. What was his dismay to see the arrow pierce the flank of the poor little Hind! She fell down immediately on a mossy bank, and swiftly the Prince ran up. He was so upset at what had happened, that he flew and got leaves and stopped the bleeding. Then he said:

'Is it not your fault, little flier? You ran away and left me yesterday, and the same would have happened to-day if this had not occurred.'

The Hind did not reply at all; what could she say? And besides, she was in too much pain to do anything but moan.

The Prince caressed her again and again. 'What have I done to you?' he said. 'I love you, and I cannot bear to think I have wounded you.'

But her moaning went on. At last the Prince resolved to go to the hut and get something to carry her on, but before he went he tied her up with little ribbons, and they were tied in such a manner that the Princess could not undo them. As she was trying to free herself she saw Giroflée coming towards her, and made a sign to her to hasten; and, strange to say, Giroflée reached her exactly at the same moment as the Prince with Becafigue.

'I have wounded this little Hind, madam,' said the Prince, 'and she is mine.'

'Sir,' replied Giroflée, 'this little Hind is well known to me--and, if you want to see how she recognises me, you will give her her liberty.'

The Prince then cut the ribbons in compliance with her request.

'Come along, my little Hind,' said Giroflée; 'kiss me!'

At this the little Hind threw herself on Giroflée's neck. 'Nestle to my heart! Now give me a sigh!' The Hind obeyed, and the Prince could not doubt that what Giroflée said was true.

'I give her to you,' said the Prince; 'for I see she loves you.'

Now when Becafigue saw Giroflée, he told the Prince that he had seen her in the castle with the Princess Désirée, and that he knew that Giroflée was staying in a part of their own hut. Why could they not find out if the Princess was staying there also? So the following night, the Prince having agreed, Becafigue listened through a chink in the wall of the hut, and what was his surprise to hear two voices talking! One said:

'Oh, that I might die at once! It would be better than to remain a Hind all the days of my life! What a fate! Only to be myself to you, and to all others a little White Hind! How terrible never to be able to talk to my Prince!'

Becafigue put his eye to the chink and this is what he saw.

There was the Princess in a beautiful dress all shining with gold. In her lovely hair were diamonds, but the tears in her eyes seemed to sparkle even more brightly. She was beautiful beyond words, and disconsolate beyond sorrow.

Becafigue nearly cried out with joy at sight of her. He ran off at once and told the Prince.

'Ah! seigneur,' said he, 'come with me at once and you will see in the flesh the maiden you love.'

The Prince ran with him, and when they came on tip-toe to the chink in the wall, he looked and saw his dear Princess.

Then so great was his joy that he could not be restrained. He went and knocked at the door, resolving to see his Princess at once.

Giroflée, thinking it was the old woman, opened the door, and the Prince immediately dashed into the room and threw himself at the feet of the Princess, and kissed her hand and told her how much he loved her.

'What! my dear little Princess, was it you that I wounded as a little Hind? What can I do to show my sorrow for so great a crime?'

The way in which he spoke put all the doubts from the Princess's mind. The Prince, knowing all, loved her. She bade him rise, and then stood with downcast eyes, fearing the worst. Her fears were justified: in a moment his arms were around her, and she was sobbing for joy on his breast.

They had stood a moment so, when suddenly the Prince started and listened. What sound was that? It was the tramp of armed men; nearer and nearer it came--the threatening sound of an advancing host. He opened the window, and, on looking out, saw a great army approaching. They were his own soldiers, going up against Désirée's father to avenge the insult offered to their Prince. And the King his father was at their head, in a

litter of gold.

When the Warrior Prince saw that his father was there he ran out to him and threw his arms round his neck and kissed him.

'Where have you been, my son?' said the King. 'Your absence has caused me great sorrow!'

Then the Prince told him all about Long-Epine, and how the Princess had been changed into a Hind through her disregard of the Fairy's warning.

The King was terribly grieved at this news, and turned his eyes to heaven and clasped his hands. At this moment the Princess Désirée came out, mounted on a pure-white horse and looking more beautiful and lovely than she had ever been. Giroflée was also with her as her attendant. The spell had been removed for ever.

At sight of them the old King blessed them, and said that he would give his kingdom to his son as soon as he was married to the Princess Désirée. The Princess thanked him a thousand times for his goodness, and then the King ordered the army to return to the city, for there would be no war, but only rejoicing.

Back into the capital, a mighty procession--an army headed by its rulers, and victorious without striking a blow. Great was the joy of all the people to see the Prince and the Princess, and they showered upon them heaps of presents the like of which was never seen.

The faithful Becafigue begged the Prince to allow him to marry Giroflée. She was delighted to have such a great offer, and more than delighted to remain in a land where she would always be with her dear Princess.

Now the Fairy Tulip, when she heard all that had happened, resolved, out of the goodness of her heart, to give Giroflée a splendid present, so that her husband should not have the advantage of being the richer. It will astonish you to hear that she gave her four big gold mines in India; and you know what gold mines in India are worth.

And the marriage feasts lasted several months. Each day was a greater

day than the one before; and every day the adventures of the little White Hind were sung throughout the country, even as they are still sung, in boudoir, fireside, and camp, to this very day.



AN INVENTOR'S WIFE

by Jeannie Pendleton Ewing

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Poems Teachers Ask For*, by Various

I remember it all so very well, the first of my married life,
That I can't believe it was years ago--it doesn't seem true at all;
Why, I just can see the little church where they made us man and wife,
And the merry glow of the first wood-fire that danced on our cottage
wall.

We were happy? Yes; and we prospered, too; the house belonged
to Joe,
And then, he worked in the planing mill, and drew the best of pay;
And our cup was full when Joey came,--our baby-boy, you know;
So, all went well till that mill burned down and the owner moved away.

It wasn't long till Joe found work, but 'twas never quite the same,--
Never steady, with smaller pay; so to make the two ends meet
He fell to inventin' some machine--I don't recall the name,
But he'd sit for hours in his little shop that opens toward the
street,--

Sit for hours, bent over his work, his tools all strewn about.
I used to want to go in there to dust and sweep the floor,
But 'twas just as if 'twas the parson there, writing his sermon out;
Even the baby--bless the child!--learned never to slam that door!

People called him a clever man, and folks from the city came
To look at his new invention and wish my Joe success;
And Joe would say, "Little woman,"--for that was my old pet-name,--

"If my plan succeeds, you shall have a coach and pair, and a fine silk dress!"

I didn't want 'em, the grand new things, but it made the big tears start
To see my Joe with his restless eyes, his fingers worn away
To the skin and bone, for he wouldn't eat; and it almost broke my heart
When he tossed at night from side to side, till the dawning of the day.

Of course, with it all he lost his place. I couldn't blame the man,
The foreman there at the factory, for losing faith in Joe,
For his mind was never upon his work, but on some invention-plan,
As with folded arms and his head bent down he wandered to and fro.

Yet, he kept on workin' at various things, till our little money went
For wheels and screws and metal casts and things I had never seen;
And I ceased to ask, "Any pay, my dear?" with the answer, "Not a cent!"
When his lock and his patent-saw had failed, he clung to that great
machine.

I remember one special thing that year. He had bought some costly tool,
When we wanted our boy to learn to read--he was five years old, you
know;
He went to his class with cold, bare feet, till at last he came from
school
And gravely said, "Don't send me back; the children tease me so!"

I hadn't the heart to cross the child, so, while I sat and sewed
He would rock his little sister in the cradle at my side;
And when the struggle was hardest and I felt keen hunger's goad
Driving me almost to despair--the little baby died.

Her father came to the cradle-side, as she lay, so small and white;
"Maggie," he said, "I have killed this child, and now I am killing you!
I swear by heaven, I will give it up!" Yet, like a thief, that night
He stole to the shop and worked; his brow all wet with a clammy dew.

I cannot tell how I lived that week, my little boy and I,
Too proud to beg; too weak to work; and the weather cold and wild.
I can only think of one dark night when the rain poured from the sky,

And the wind went wailing round the house, like the ghost of my buried child.

Joe still toiled in the little shop. Somebody clicked the gate;
A neighbor-lad brought in the mail and laid it on the floor,
But I sat half-stunned by my heavy grief crouched over the empty grate,
Till I heard--the crack of a pistol-shot; and I sprang to the workshop door.

That door was locked and the bolt shut fast. I could not cry, nor speak,
But I snatched my boy from the corner there, sick with a sudden dread,
And carried him out through the garden plot, forgetting my arms were weak,
Forgetting the rainy torrent that beat on my bare young head;

The front door yielded to my touch. I staggered faintly in,
Fearing--_what_? He stood unharmed, though the wall showed a jagged hole.
In his trembling hand, his aim had failed, and the great and deadly sin
Of his own life's blood was not yet laid on the poor man's tortured soul.

But the pistol held another charge, I knew; and like something mad
I shook my fist in my poor man's face, and shrieked at him, fierce and wild,
"How can you dare to rob us so?"--and I seized the little lad;
"How can you dare to rob your wife and your little helpless child?"

All of a sudden, he bowed his head, while from his nerveless hand
That hung so limp, I almost feared to see the pistol fall.
"Maggie," he said in a low, low voice, "you see me as I stand
A hopeless man. My plan has failed. That letter tells you all."

Then for a moment the house was still as ever the house of death;
Only the drip of the rain outside, for the storm was almost o'er;
But no;--there followed another sound, and I started, caught my breath;
As a stalwart man with a heavy step came in at the open door.

I shall always think him an angel sent from heaven in a human guise;
He must have guessed our awful state; he couldn't help but see
There was something wrong; but never a word, never a look in his eyes

Told what he thought, as in kindly way he talked to Joe and me.

He was come from a thriving city firm, and they'd sent him here to say
That _one_ of Joe's inventions was a great, successful thing;
And which do you think? His window-catch that he'd tinkered up one day;
And we were to have a good per cent on the sum that each would bring.

And then the pleasant stranger went, and we wakened as from a dream.
My man bent down his head and said, "Little woman, you've saved my life!"
The worn look gone from his dear gray eyes, and in its place, a gleam
From the sun that has shone so brightly since, on Joe and his happy
wife!



J

THE JUDGMENT OF THE JACKAL

from *The Talking Thrush and Other Tales from India*

Collected by W·Crooke And Retold by W·H·Drouse

PG ebook #30635

A MERCHANT was returning home from a long journey, riding upon a mule. As he drew near home, night overtook him; and he was forced to look out for shelter. Seeing a mill by the roadside, he knocked at the door.

"Come in!" said the Miller.

"May I stay here for the night?" asked the Merchant.

"By all means," said the Miller, "if you pay me well."

The Merchant thought this rather mean; because in those days a stranger was made welcome everywhere without paying anything. However, he made the best of it, and came in. The Miller led off his mule to the stable.

"Please take care of my mule," said the Merchant; "I have still a long way to go."

"Oh," said the Miller, "your mule will be all right." Then he rubbed him down and fed him.[22]

In the morning the Merchant asked for his mule.

"I am very sorry," said the Miller; "he must have got loose last night, and I can't find him anywhere."

The Merchant was much dismayed. He went out to look for himself, and there, to be sure, was his mule, tied by the halter to the mill.

"Why, look here, Miller," says he, "here is the mule!"

"Oh no," says the Miller, "that mule is mine."

"Yours?" said the Merchant, getting angry. "Last night your stable was empty. And don't you think I know my own mule?"

"That is mine," said the Miller again; "my mill had a young mule in the night, and that is he."

The Merchant was now very angry indeed; but he could not help himself,[23] as he did not want to fight; he was a very peaceful Merchant. So he said—

"Well, I have no doubt it's all right; but just to satisfy me, let us ask the Rev. Dr. Jackal to decide between us; and whatever he says I will abide by."

"Very good," answered the Miller; and away they went to the den of his reverence the Jackal. Dr. Jackal was sitting with his hind legs crossed, and smoking a hubble-bubble.

"Good morning, worthy gentlemen," said the Jackal; "how can I serve you?"

Said the Merchant, "Last night, my Lord Judge, I lodged with this Miller here, and he took charge of my mule; but now he says it has run away, though I saw it with my own eyes tied by the halter to his mill. He says[24] that the mule I saw is his, and that his

mill is the mother of it, and that it was born last night while I was asleep."

"Go back to the mill," said the Jackal, "and wait for me. I will just wash my face, and then I'll settle your business."

They went away, and waited a long time, but no Jackal. Late in the afternoon, they got tired of waiting for the Jackal, and determined to go and look for him. There he was still, sitting in his den and smoking a hubble-bubble.

"Why didn't you come?" asked the Miller. "We have been waiting for you all day."

"Oh, my dear sir, I was too busy," said the Jackal. "When I went to wash my face, I found that all the water had caught fire; I have only just put it out."

"You must be mad, your reverence," said the Miller. "Who ever heard of water catching fire?"

"And who ever heard," replied the Jackal, "of a mill having a young mule?"

The Miller saw that he was found out, and was so much ashamed that he gave back the mule to its owner, and the Merchant went home.



KUNA, THE DRAGON.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Legends of Wailuku*, by Charlotte Hapai

Far above Rainbow Falls there lived a powerful kupua named Kuna. Kuna had the form of a monstrous dragon, unlike anything in these islands today.

Kuna often tormented the goddess Hina in her rocky cave behind Rainbow Falls by sending over great torrents of water or by rolling logs and boulders down the stream. Quite often he would block the stream below

the falls with sediment sent down by freshets during the rainy seasons.

But Hina was well protected. Her cave was large and the misty cloud of spray from the falling waters helped to conceal it. So in spite of the frequent floods and many threats from Kuna, Hina paid him not the slightest attention, but with her songs and gay laughter lightly mocked him as she worked.

On many days Hina was quite alone, while her eldest son, the demi-god Maui, was away on one of his numerous expeditions. Even then she did not mind this, for should any danger befall her she had a peculiar cloud servant which she called "ao-opua." If Hina were in trouble this ao-opua would rise high above the falls, taking an unusual shape. When Maui saw this warning cloud he would hurry home at once to his mother's side.

One night while Maui was away from home on the Island of Maui, where he had gone to bargain with the Sun, a storm arose. The angry waters roared about the mouth of Hina's cave. They hissed and tossed in ugly blackness down the narrow river gorge; but Hina heard naught of the wildness without. Being used to the noisy cataract, her slumbers were not disturbed by the heightened tumult of its roar.

But Kuna, quite aware of the situation, was quick to take advantage and to act. Hina's apparent indifference annoyed him. He recalled several failures to conquer her, and rage overwhelmed him. Calling upon his powers he lifted an immense boulder and hurled it over the cliffs. It fitted perfectly where it fell between the walls of the gorge and blocked the rush of the hurrying torrent.

Laughing loudly at his success, Kuna called on Hina and warned her of her plight, but, still unknowing, Hina slept on until the cold waters entered the cave, rapidly creeping higher and higher until they reached her where she slept. Startled into wakefulness she sprang to her feet, and her cries of panic resounded against the distant hills. As the waters rose higher her cries became more terrified until they reached the Island of Maui and the ears of her son.

Through the darkness Maui could see the strange warning cloud, unusually large and mysterious. With his mother's cries ringing in his ears he bounded down the mountain to his canoe, which he sent across the sea to the mouth of the Wailuku with two strong sweeps of his paddle. The long, narrow rock in the river below the Mauka Bridge, called Ka Waa o Maui (The Canoe of Maui), is still just where he ran it aground at the foot of the rapids.

Seizing his magic club with which he had conquered the Sun, Maui rushed to the scene of danger. Seeing the rock blocking the river he raised his club and struck it a mighty blow. Nothing could resist the magic club! The rock split in two, allowing the strong current to rush unhindered on its way.

Hearing the crash of the club and realizing his attempt on the life of Hina had again failed, Kuna turned and fled up the river.

The remains of the great boulder, now known as Lonokaeho, overgrown with tropical plants and with the river rushing through the rift, lies there to this day as proof of Maui's prowess.



LITTLE CHARLEY

by Charles Dickens

Project Gutenberg's *Graded Literature Readers: Fourth Book*, by Various

I

1. We found the house to which we had been directed by a friend of my guardian, and we went up to the top room. I tapped at the door, and a little shrill voice inside said: "We are locked in; Mrs. Blinder's got the key."

2. We had been prepared for this by Mrs. Blinder, the shopkeeper below, who had given us the key of the room.

3. I applied the key on hearing this, and opened the door. In a poor room, with a sloping ceiling, and containing very little furniture, was a mite of a boy, some five or six years old, nursing and hushing a heavy child of eighteen months. There was no fire, though the weather was cold; both children were wrapped in some poor shawls and tippets as a substitute. Their clothing was not so warm, however, but that their noses looked red and pinched and their small figures shrunken, as the boy walked up and down, nursing and hushing the child, with its head on his shoulder.

4. "Who has locked you up here alone?" we naturally asked.

"Charley," said the boy, standing still to gaze at us.

"Is Charley your brother?"

"No. She's my sister Charlotte. Father called her Charley."

5. "Where is Charley now?"

"Out a-washing," said the boy, beginning to walk up and down again, and taking the baby's nankeen bonnet much too near the bedstead by trying to gaze at us at the same time.

6. We were looking at one another and at these two children, when there came into the room a very little girl, childish in figure, but shrewd and older looking in the face--pretty faced, too--wearing a womanly sort of bonnet much too large for her and drying her bare arms on a womanly sort of apron. Her fingers were white and wrinkled with washing, and the soapsuds were yet smoking which she wiped off her arms. But for this she might have been a child playing at washing and imitating a poor workingwoman with a quick observation of the truth.

7. She had come running from some place in the neighborhood, and had made all the haste she could. Consequently, though she was very light, she was out of breath and could not speak at first, as she stood panting, and wiping her arms, and looking quietly at us.

8. "Oh, here's Charley!" said the boy.

The child he was nursing stretched forth its arms and cried out to be taken by Charley. The little girl took it in a womanly sort of manner belonging to the apron and the bonnet, and stood looking at us over the burden that clung to her most affectionately.

9. "Is it possible," whispered my guardian, as we put a chair for the little creature and got her to sit down with her load--the boy keeping close to her, holding to her apron--"that this child works for the rest! Look at this! Look at this!"

10. It was a thing to look at. The three children close together, and two of them relying solely on the third, and the third so young and yet with an air of age and steadiness that sat so strangely on the childish figure.

II

11. "Charley, Charley," said my guardian, "how old are you?"

"Over thirteen, sir," replied the child.

12. "Oh, what a great age!" said my guardian. "What a great age, Charley!"

I cannot describe the tenderness with which he spoke to her, half playfully, yet all the more compassionately and mournfully.

13. "And do you live alone here with these babies, Charley?" said my guardian.

"Yes, sir," returned the child, looking up into his face with perfect confidence, "since father died."

14. "And how do you live, Charley? O Charley," said my guardian, turning his face away for a moment, "how do you live?"

"Since father died, sir, I've gone out to work. I'm out washing to-day."

15. "God help you, Charley!" said my guardian. "You're not tall enough to reach the tub."

"In pattens, I am, sir," she said quickly. "I've got a high pair that belonged to mother."

"And when did mother die? Poor mother!"

16. "Mother died just after Emma was born," said the child, glancing at the face upon her bosom. "Then father said I was to be as good a mother to her as I could. And so I tried. And so I worked at home, and did cleaning and nursing and washing for a long time before I began to go out. And that's how I know how; don't you see, sir?"

17. "And do you often go out?"

"As often as I can," said Charley, opening her eyes and smiling, "because of earning sixpences and shillings."

18. "And do you always lock the babies up when you go out?"

"To keep 'em safe, sir, don't you see?" said Charley. "Mrs. Blinder comes up now and then, and Mr. Gridley comes up sometimes, and perhaps I can run in sometimes; and they can play, you know, and Tom isn't afraid of being locked up. Are you, Tom?"

"No--o!" said Tom, stoutly.

19. "When it comes on dark, the lamps are lighted down in the court, and they show up here quite bright--almost quite bright. Don't they, Tom?"

"Yes, Charley," said Tom; "almost quite bright."

20. "Then, he's as good as gold," said the little creature--oh! in such a motherly, womanly way. "And when Emma's tired, he puts her to bed. And when he's tired, he goes to bed himself. And when I come home and

light the candle and have a bit of supper, he sits up again and has it with me. Don't you, Tom?"

21. "Oh, yes, Charley," said Tom. "That I do!" And either in this glimpse of the great pleasure of his life, or in gratitude and love for Charley, who was all in all to him, he laid his face among the scanty folds of her frock and passed from laughing into crying.

22. It was the first time since our entry that a tear had been shed among these children. The little orphan girl had spoken of their father and their mother as if all that sorrow were subdued by the necessity of taking courage, and by her childish importance in being able to work, and by her bustling, busy way. But now, when Tom cried--although she sat quite tranquil, looking quietly at us, and did not by any movement disturb a hair of the head of either of her little charges--I saw two silent tears fall down her face.

23. I stood at the window with Ada, pretending to look at the housetops, and the blackened stack of chimneys, and the poor plants, and the birds, in little cages, belonging to the neighbors, when I found that Mrs. Blinder, from the shop below, had come in--perhaps it had taken her all this time to get upstairs--and was talking to my guardian.

"It's not much to forgive 'em the rent, sir," she said. "Who could take it from them!"

24. "Well, well!" said my guardian to us two. "It is enough that the time will come when this good woman will find that it was much, and that forasmuch as she did it unto the least of these--This child," he added, after a few moments, "could she possibly continue this?"

25. "Really, sir, I think she might," said Mrs. Blinder, getting her heavy breath by painful degrees. "She's as handy as it's possible to be. Bless you, sir, the way she tended the two children after the mother died was the talk of the yard. And it was a wonder to see her with him after he was ill, it really was. 'Mrs. Blinder,' he said to me, the very last he spoke--he was lying there--'Mrs. Blinder, I saw an angel sitting in this room last night along with my child, and I trust

her to our Father."

26. We kissed Charley, and took her down-stairs with us, and stopped outside the house to see her run away to her work. I don't know where she was going, but we saw her run--such a little, little creature, in her womanly bonnet and apron--through a covered way at the bottom of the court, and melt into the city's strife and sound like a dewdrop in an ocean.

III

27. One night, after I had gone to my room, I heard a soft tap at my door. So I said, "Come in," and there came in a pretty little girl, neatly dressed in mourning, who dropped a courtesy.

28. "If you please, miss," said the little girl, in a soft voice, "I am Charley."

"Why, so you are!" said I, stooping down in astonishment, and giving her a kiss. "How glad I am to see you, Charley!"

29. "If you please, miss," pursued Charley, in the same soft voice, "I'm your maid."

"Charley?"

"If you please, miss, I'm a present to you, with Mr. Jarndyce's love."

30. I sat down with my hand on Charley's neck, and looked at Charley.

"And oh, miss," says Charley, clapping her hands, with the tears starting down her dimpled cheeks, "Tom's at school, if you please; and little Emma, she's with Mrs. Blinder, miss. And Tom, he would have been at school; and Emma, she would have been left with Mrs. Blinder; and I should have been here, all a deal sooner, miss; only Mr. Jarndyce thought that Tom and Emma and I had better get a little used to parting first, we were so small. Don't cry, if you please, miss."

31. "I can't help it, Charley."

"No, miss, I can't help it," says Charley. "And, if you please, miss, Mr. Jarndyce's love, and he thinks you'll like to teach me now and then. And, if you please, Tom and Emma and I are to see each other once a month. And I'm so happy and so thankful, miss," cried Charley, with a heaving heart, "and I'll try to be such a good maid!"

32. Charley dried her eyes, and entered on her functions, going in her matronly little way about and about the room, and folding up everything she could lay her hands upon.

33. Presently, Charley came creeping back to my side, and said: "Oh, don't cry, if you please, miss."

And I said again: "I can't help it, Charley."

And Charley said again: "No, miss; I can't help it." And so, after all, I did cry for joy, indeed, and so did she.



THE DOG OF MONTARGIS.

Project Gutenberg's *School Reading By Grades: Fifth Year*, by James Baldwin

I.

In the old castle of Montargis in France, there was once a stone mantelpiece of workmanship so rare that it was talked about by the whole country. And yet it was not altogether its beauty that caused people to speak of it and remember it. It was famous rather on account of the strange scene that was carved upon it. To those who asked about its meaning, the old custodian of the castle would sometimes tell the following story.

It happened more than five hundred years ago, when this castle was new and strong, and people lived and thought in very different sort from what they do now. Among the young men of that time there was none more noble than Aubrey de Montdidier, the nephew of the Count of Montargis; and among all the knights who had favor at the royal court, there was none more brave than the young Sieur de Narsac, captain of the king's men at arms.

Now these two men were devoted friends, and whenever their other duties allowed them, they were sure to be in each other's company. Indeed, it was a rare thing to see either of them walking the streets of Paris alone.

"I will meet you at the tournament to-morrow," said Aubrey gayly, one evening, as he was parting from his friend.

"Yes, at the tournament to-morrow," said De Narsac; "and be sure that you come early."

The tournament was to be a grand affair. A gentleman from Provence was to run a tilt with a famous Burgundian knight. Both men were noted for their horsemanship and their skill with the lance. All Paris would be out to see them.

When the time came, De Narsac was at the place appointed. But Aubrey failed to appear. What could it mean? It was not at all like Aubrey to forget his promise; it was seldom that he allowed anything to keep him away from the tournament.

"Have you seen my friend Aubrey to-day?" De Narsac asked this question a hundred times. Everybody gave the same answer, and wondered what had happened.

The day passed and another day came, and still there was no news from Aubrey. De Narsac had called at his friend's lodgings, but could learn nothing. The young man had not been seen since the morning before the tournament.

Three days passed, and still not a word. De Narsac was greatly troubled.

He knew now that some accident must have happened to Aubrey. But what could it have been?

Early in the morning of the fourth day he was aroused by a strange noise at his door. He dressed himself in haste and opened it. A dog was crouching there. It was a greyhound, so poor that its ribs stuck out, so weak that it could hardly stand.

De Narsac knew the animal without looking at the collar on its neck. It was Dragon, his friend Aubrey's greyhound,--the dog who went with him whenever he walked out, the dog who was never seen save in its master's company.

The poor creature tried to stand. His legs trembled from weakness; he swayed from side to side. He wagged his tail feebly, and tried to put his nose in De Narsac's hand. De Narsac saw at once that he was half starved; that he had not had food for a long time.

He led the dog into his room and fed him some warm milk. He bathed the poor fellow's nose and bloodshot eyes with cold water. "Tell me where is your master," he said. Then he set before him a full meal that would have tempted any dog.

The greyhound ate heartily, and seemed to be much stronger. He licked De Narsac's hands. He fondled his feet. Then he ran to the door and tried to make signs to his friend to follow him. He whined pitifully.

De Narsac understood. "You want to lead me to your master, I see." He put on his hat and went out with the dog.

Through the narrow lanes and crooked streets of the old city, Dragon led the way. At each corner he would stop and look back to make sure that De Narsac was following. He went over the long bridge--the only one that spanned the river in those days. Then he trotted out through the gate of St. Martin and into the open country beyond the walls.

In a little while the dog left the main road and took a bypath that led into the forest of Bondy. De Narsac kept his hand on his sword now, for they were on dangerous ground. The forest was a great resort for robbers

and lawless men, and more than one wild and wicked deed had been enacted there.

But Dragon did not go far into the woods. He stopped suddenly near a dense thicket of briars and tangled vines. He whined as though in great distress. Then he took hold of the sleeve of De Narsac's coat, and led him round to the other side of the thicket.

There under a low-spreading oak the grass had been trampled down; there were signs, too, of freshly turned-up earth. With moans of distress the dog stretched himself upon the ground, and with pleading eyes looked up into De Narsac's face.

"Ah, my poor fellow!" said De Narsac, "you have led me here to show me your master's grave." And with that he turned and hurried back to the city; but the dog would not stir from his place.

That afternoon a company of men, led by De Narsac, rode out to the forest. They found in the ground beneath the oak what they had expected--the murdered body of young Aubrey de Montdidier.

"Who could have done this foul deed?" they asked of one another; and then they wept, for they all loved Aubrey.

They made a litter of green branches, and laid the body upon it. Then, the dog following them, they carried it back to the city and buried it in the king's cemetery. And all Paris mourned the untimely end of the brave young knight.

II.

After this, the greyhound went to live with the young Sieur de Narsac. He followed the knight wherever he went. He slept in his room and ate from his hand. He seemed to be as much devoted to his new master as he had been to the old.

One morning they went out for a stroll through the city. The streets were crowded; for it was a holiday and all the fine people of Paris were

enjoying the sunlight and the fresh air. Dragon, as usual, kept close to the heels of his master.

De Narsac walked down one street and up another, meeting many of his friends, and now and then stopping to talk a little while. Suddenly, as they were passing a corner, the dog leaped forward and planted himself in front of his master. He growled fiercely; he crouched as though ready for a spring; his eyes were fixed upon some one in the crowd.

[Illustration: The dog planted himself in front of his master.]

Then, before De Narsac could speak, he leaped forward upon a young man whom he had singled out. The man threw up his arm to save his throat; but the quickness of the attack and the weight of the dog caused him to fall to the ground. There is no telling what might have followed had not those who were with him beaten the dog with their canes, and driven him away.

De Narsac knew the man. His name was Richard Macaire, and he belonged to the king's bodyguard.

Never before had the greyhound been known to show anger towards any person. "What do you mean by such conduct?" asked his master as they walked homeward. Dragon's only answer was a low growl; but it was the best that he could give. The affair had put a thought into De Narsac's mind which he could not dismiss.

Within less than a week the thing happened again. This time Macaire was walking in the public garden. De Narsac and the dog were some distance away. But as soon as Dragon saw the man, he rushed at him. It was all that the bystanders could do to keep him from throttling Macaire. De Narsac hurried up and called him away; but the dog's anger was fearful to see.

It was well known in Paris that Macaire and young Aubrey had not been friends. It was remembered that they had had more than one quarrel. And now the people began to talk about the dog's strange actions, and some went so far as to put this and that together.

At last the matter reached the ears of the king. He sent for De Narsac and had a long talk with him. "Come back to-morrow and bring the dog with you," he said. "We must find out more about this strange affair."

The next day De Narsac, with Dragon at his heels, was admitted into the king's audience room. The king was seated in his great chair, and many knights and men at arms were standing around him. Hardly had De Narsac stepped inside when the dog leaped quickly forward. He had seen Macaire, and had singled him out from among all the rest. He sprang upon him. He would have torn him in pieces if no one had interfered.

There was now only one way to explain the matter.

"This greyhound," said De Narsac, "is here to denounce the Chevalier Macaire as the slayer of his master, young Aubrey de Montdidier. He demands that justice be done, and that the murderer be punished for his crime."

The Chevalier Macaire was pale and trembling. He stammered a denial of his guilt, and declared that the dog was a dangerous beast, and ought to be put out of the way. "Shall a soldier in the service of the king be accused by a dog?" he cried. "Shall he be condemned on such testimony as this? I, too, demand justice."

"Let the judgment of God decide!" cried the knights who were present.

And so the king declared that there should be a trial by the judgment of God. For in those rude times it was a very common thing to determine guilt or innocence in this way--that is, by a combat between the accuser and the accused. In such cases it was believed that God would always aid the cause of the innocent and bring about the defeat of the guilty.

The combat was to take place that very afternoon in the great common by the riverside. The king's herald made a public announcement of it, naming the dog as the accuser and the Chevalier Macaire as the accused. A great crowd of people assembled to see this strange trial by the judgment of God.

The king and his officers were there to make sure that no injustice was

done to either the man or the dog. The man was allowed to defend himself with a short stick; the dog was given a barrel into which he might run if too closely pressed.

At a signal the combat began. Macaire stood upon his guard while the dog darted swiftly around him, dodging the blows that were aimed at him, and trying to get at his enemy's throat. The man seemed to have lost all his courage. His breath came short and quick. He was trembling from head to foot.

Suddenly the dog leaped upon him and threw him to the ground. In his great terror he cried to the king for mercy, and acknowledged his guilt.

"It is the judgment of God!" cried the king.

The officers rushed in and dragged the dog away before he could harm the guilty man; and Macaire was hurried off to the punishment which his crimes deserved.

And this is the scene that was carved on the old mantelpiece in the castle of Montargis--this strange trial by the judgment of God. Is it not fitting that a dog so faithful, devoted, and brave should have his memory thus preserved in stone? He is remembered also in story and song. In France ballads have been written about him; and his strange history has been dramatized in both French and English.



THE NIGHT MOTH'S PARTY

Project Gutenberg's *Among the Night People*, by Clara Dillingham Pierson

From the time when she was a tiny golden-green Caterpillar, Miss Polyphemus had wanted to go into society. She began life on a maple leaf with a few brothers and sisters, who hatched at the same time from a cluster of flattened eggs which their mother had laid there ten days before. The first thing she remembered was the light and color and sound when she broke the shell open that May morning. The first thing she did

was to eat the shell out of which she had just crawled. Then she got acquainted with her brothers and sisters, many of whom had also eaten their egg-shells, although two had begun at once on maple leaves. It was well that she took time for this now, for the family were soon scattered and several of her sisters she never saw again.

She found it a very lovely world to live in. There was so much to eat. Yes, and there were so many kinds of leaves that she liked,--oak, hickory, apple, maple, elm, and several others. Sometimes she wished that she had three mouths instead of one. In those days she had few visitors. It is true that other Caterpillars happened along once in a while, but they were almost as hungry as she, and they couldn't speak without stopping eating. They could, of course, if they talked with their mouths full, but she had too good manners for that, and, besides, she said that if she did, she couldn't enjoy her food so much.

You must not think that it was wrong in her to care so much about eating. She was only doing what is expected of a Polyphemus Caterpillar, and you would have to do the same if you were a Polyphemus Caterpillar. When she was ten days old she had to weigh ten times as much as she did the morning that she was hatched. When she was twenty days old she had to weigh sixty times as much; when she was a month old she had to weigh six hundred and twenty times as much; and when she was fifty days old she had to weigh four thousand times as much as she did at hatching. Every bit of this flesh was made of the food she ate. That is why eating was so important, you know, and if she had chosen to eat the wrong kind of leaves just because they tasted good, she would never have become such a fine great Caterpillar as she did. She might better not eat anything than to eat the wrong sort, and she knew it.

Still, she often wished that she had more time for visiting, and thought that she would be very gay next year, when she got her wings. "I'll make up for it then," she said to herself, "when my growing is done and I have time for play." Then she ate some more good, plain food, for she knew that there would be no happy Moth-times for Caterpillars who did not eat as they should.

She had five vacations of about a day each when she ate nothing at all. These were the times when she changed her skin, crawling out of the

tight old one and appearing as fresh and clean as possible in the new one which was ready underneath. After her last change she was ready to plan her cocoon, and she was a most beautiful Caterpillar. She was about as long as a small cherry leaf, and as plump as a Caterpillar can be. She was light green, with seven slanting yellow lines on each side of her body, and a purplish-brown V-shaped mark on the back part of each side. There were many little orange-colored bunches on her body, which showed beautiful gleaming lights when she moved. Growing out of these bunches were tiny tufts of bristles.

She had three pairs of real legs and several pairs of make-believe ones. Her real legs were on the front part of her body and were slender. These she expected to keep always. The make-believe ones were called pro-legs. They grew farther back and were fat, awkward, jointless things which she would not need after her cocoon was spun. But for them, she would have had to drag the back part of her body around like a Snake. With them, the back part of her body could walk as well as the front, although not quite so fast. She always took a few steps with her real legs and then waited for her pro-legs to catch up.

As the weather grew colder the Polyphemus Caterpillar hunted around on the ground for a good place for her cocoon. She found an excellent twig lying among the dead leaves, and decided to fasten to that. Then began her hardest work, spinning a fluffy mass of gray-white silk which clung to the twig and to one of the dry leaves and was almost exactly the color of the leaf. Other Caterpillars came along and stopped to visit, for they did not have to eat at cocoon-spinning time.

"Better fasten your cocoon to a tree," said a pale bluish-green Promethea Caterpillar. "Put it inside a curled leaf, like mine, and wind silk around the stem to strengthen it. Then you can swing every time the wind blows, and the silk will keep the leaf from wearing out."

"But I don't want to swing," answered the Polyphemus Caterpillar. "I'd rather lie still and think about things."

"Fasten to the twig of a tree," advised a pale green Cecropia Caterpillar with red, yellow, and blue bunches. "Then the wind just moves you a little. Fasten it to a twig and taper it off nicely at each

end, and then----"

"Yes," said the Polyphemus Caterpillar, "and then the Blue-Jays and Chickadees will poke wheat or corn or beechnuts into the upper end of it. I don't care to turn my sleeping room into a corn-crib."

Just here some other Polyphemus Caterpillars came along and agreed with their relative. "Go ahead with your tree homes," said they. "We know what we want, and we'll see next summer who knew best."

The Polyphemus cocoons were spun on the ground where the dead leaves had blown in between some stones, and no wandering Cows or Sheep would be likely to step on them. First a mass of coarse silk which it took half a day to make, then an inside coating of a kind of varnish, then as much silk as a Caterpillar could spin in four or five days, next another inside varnishing, and the cocoons were done. As the Polyphemus Caterpillars snuggled down for the long winter's sleep, each said to himself something like this: "Those poor Caterpillars in the trees! How cold they will be! I hope they may come out all right in the spring, but I doubt it very much."

And when the Cecropia and Promethea Caterpillars dozed off for the winter, they said: "What a pity that those Polyphemus Caterpillars would lie around on the ground. Well, we advised them what to do, so it isn't our fault."

They all had a lovely winter, and swung or swayed or lay still, just as they had chosen to do. Early in the spring, the farmer's wife and little girl came out to find wild flowers, and scraped the leaves away from among the stones. Out rolled the cocoon that the first Polyphemus Caterpillar had spun and the farmer's wife picked it up and carried it off. She might have found more cocoons if the little girl had not called her away.

This was how it happened that one May morning a little girl stood by the sitting-room window in the white farmhouse and watched Miss Polyphemus crawl slowly out of her cocoon. A few days before a sour, milky-looking stuff had begun to trickle into the lower end of the cocoon, softening the hard varnish and the soft silken threads until a tiny doorway was

opened. Now all was ready and Miss Polyphemus pushed out. She was very wet and weak and forlorn. "Oh," said she to herself, "it is more fun to be a new Caterpillar than it is to be a new Moth. I've only six legs left, and it will be very hard worrying along on these. I shall have to give up walking."

It was discouraging. You can see how it would be. She had been used to having so many legs, and had looked forward all the summer before to the time when she should float lightly through the air and sip honey from flowers. She had dreamed of it all winter. And now here she was--wet and weak, with only six legs left, and four very small and crumpled wings. Her body was so big and fat that she could not hold it up from the window-sill. She wanted to cry--it was all so sad and disappointing. She would have done so, had she not remembered how very unbecoming it is to cry. When she remembered that, she decided to take a nap instead, and that was a most sensible thing to do, for crying always makes matters worse, while sleeping makes them better.

When she awakened she felt much stronger and more cheerful. She was drier and her body felt lighter. This was because the fluids from it were being pumped into her wings. That was making them grow, and the beautiful colors began to show more brightly on them. "I wonder," she said to herself, "if Moths always feel so badly when they first come out?"

If she had but known it, there were at that very time hundreds of Moths as helpless as she, clinging to branches, leaves, and stones all through the forest. There were many Polyphemus Moths just out, for in their family it is the custom for all to leave their cocoons at just about such a time in the morning. Perhaps she would have felt more patient if she had known this, for it does seem to make hard times easier to bear when one knows that everybody else has hard times also. Of course other people always are having trouble, but she was young and really believed for a time that she was the only uncomfortable Moth in the world.

All day long her wings were stretching and growing smooth. When it grew dark she was nearly ready to fly. Then the farmer's wife lifted her gently by the wings and put her on the inside of the wire window-screen. When the lights in the house were all put out, the moonbeams shone in on

Miss Polyphemus and showed her beautiful sand-colored body and wings with the dark border on the front pair and the lighter border on the back pair.

On the back ones were dark eye-spots with clear places in the middle, through which one could see quite clearly.

"I would like to fly," sighed Miss Polyphemus, "and I believe I could if it were not for this horrid screen." She did not know that the farmer's wife had put her there to keep her safe from night birds until she was quite strong.

The wind blew in, sweet with the scent of wild cherry and shad-tree blossoms, and poor Miss Polyphemus looked over toward the forest where she had lived when she was a Caterpillar, and wished herself safely there. "Much good it does me to have wings when I cannot use them," said she. "I want something to eat. There is no honey to be sucked out of wire netting. I wish I were a happy Caterpillar again, eating leaves on the trees." She was not the first Moth who has wished herself a Caterpillar, but she soon changed her mind.

There fluttered toward her another Polyphemus Moth, a handsome fellow, marked exactly as she was, only with darker coloring. His body was more slender, and his feelers were very beautiful and feathery. She was fat and had slender feelers.

"Ah!" said he. "I thought I should find you soon."

"Indeed?" she replied. "I wonder what made you think that?"

"My feelers, of course," said he. "They always tell me where to find my friends. You know how that is yourself."

"I?" said she, as she changed her position a little. "I am just from my cocoon. This was my coming-out day."

"And so you have not met any one yet?" he asked. "Ah, this is a strange world--a very strange world. I would advise you to be very careful with whom you make friends. There are so many bad Moths, you know."

"Good-evening," said a third voice near them, and another Polyphemus Moth with feathery feelers alighted on the screen. He smiled sweetly at Miss Polyphemus and scowled fiercely at the other Moth. It would have ended in a quarrel right then and there, if a fourth Moth had not come at that minute. One after another came, until there were nine handsome fellows on the outside and Miss Polyphemus on the inside of the screen trying to entertain them all and keep them from quarrelling. It made her very proud to think so many were at her coming-out party. Still, she would have enjoyed it better, she thought, if some whom she had known as Caterpillars could be there to see how much attention she was having paid to her. There was one Caterpillar whom she had never liked. She only wished that she could see her now.

Still, society tires one very much, and it was hard to keep her guests from quarrelling. When she got to talking with one about maple-trees, another was sure to come up and say that he had always preferred beech when he was a Caterpillar. And the two outside would glare at each other while she hastily thought of something else to say.

At last those outside got to fighting. There was only one, the handsomest of all, who said he thought too much of his feelers to fight anybody. "Supposing I should fight and break them off," said he. "I couldn't smell a thing for the rest of my life." He was very sensible, and really the eight other fellows were fighting on account of Miss Polyphemus, for whenever they thought she liked one best they began to bump up against him.

Toward morning the farmer's wife awakened and looked at Miss Polyphemus. When she saw that she was strong enough to fly, she opened the screen and let her go. By that time three of those with feathery feelers were dead, three were broken-winged and clinging helplessly to the screen, and two were so busy fighting that they didn't see Miss Polyphemus go. The handsome great fellow who did not believe in fighting went with her, and they lived in the forest after that. But she never cared for society again.



OUR DUMB ANIMALS, by Silas X. Floyd

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Upward Path*, by Various

Domestic animals--like horses, cats and dogs--seem to be almost as dependent upon kind treatment and affection as human beings. Horses and dogs especially are the most keenly intelligent of our dumb friends, and are alike sensitive to cruelty in any form. They are influenced to an equal degree by kind and affectionate treatment.

If there is any form of cruelty that is more blameworthy than another, it is abuse of a faithful horse who gives his life to the service of the owner. When a horse is pulling a heavy load with all his might, doing the best he can to move under it, to strike him, spur him, or swear at him is barbarous. To kick a dog around or strike him with sticks just for the fun of hearing him yelp or seeing him run, is equally barbarous. No high-minded man, no high-minded boy or girl, would do such a thing.

We should never forget how helpless, in a large sense, dumb animals are--and how absolutely dependent upon the humanity and kindness of their owners. They are really the slaves of man, having no language by which to express their feelings or needs.

The poet Cowper said:

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility, the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

Boys and girls should be willing to pledge themselves to be kind to all harmless living creatures, and every boy and girl should strive to protect such creatures from cruel usage on the part of others. It is noble, boys and girls, for us to speak for those that cannot speak for themselves, and it is noble, also, for us to protect those that cannot protect themselves.



THE PRISONERS OF THE PITCHER-PLANT

Project Gutenberg's *The Haunters of the Silences*, by Charles G. D. Roberts

At the edge of a rough piece of open, where the scrubby bushes which clothed the plain gave space a little to the weeds and harsh grasses, stood the clustering pitchers of a fine young sarracenia. These pitchers, which were its leaves, were of a light, cool green, vividly veined with crimson and shading into a bronzy red about the lip and throat. They were of all sizes, being at all stages of growth; and the largest, which had now, on the edge of summer, but barely attained maturity, were about six inches in length and an inch and a quarter in extreme diameter. Down in the very heart of the cluster, hardly to be discerned, was a tiny red-tipped bud, destined to shoot up, later in the season, into a sturdy flower-stalk.

[Illustration: "AT THIS MOMENT A PASSING SHRIKE SWOOPED DOWN."]

Against the fresh, warm green of the sunlit world surrounding it, the sarracenia's peculiar colouring stood out conspicuously, its streaks and splashes of red having the effect of blossoms. This effect, at a season when bright-hued blooms were scarce, made the plant very attractive to any insects that chanced within view of it. There was nearly always some flutterer or hummer poising above it, or touching it eagerly to dart away again in disappointment. But every once in awhile some little wasp, or fly, or shining-winged beetle, or gauzy ichneumon, would alight on the alluring lip, pause, and peer down into the pitcher. As a rule the small investigator would venture farther and farther, till it disappeared. Then it never came out again.

On a leaf of a huckleberry bush, overhanging the pitcher-plant, a little black ant was running about with the nimble curiosity of her kind. An orange and black butterfly, fluttering lazily in the sun, came close

beside the leaf. At this moment a passing shrike swooped down and caught the butterfly in his beak. One of his long wings, chancing to strike the leaf, sent it whirling from its stem; and the ant fell directly upon one of the pitchers below.

It was far down upon the red, shining lip of the pitcher that she fell; and there she clung resolutely, her feet sinking into a sort of fur of smooth, whitish hairs. When she had quite recovered her equanimity she started to explore her new surroundings; and, because that was the easiest way to go, she went in the direction toward which the hairs all pointed. In a moment, therefore, she found herself just on the edge of the precipitous slope from the lip to the throat of the pitcher. Here, finding the slope strangely slippery, she thought it best to stop and retrace her steps. But when she attempted this she found it impossible. The little, innocent-looking hairs all pressed against her, thrusting her downward. The more she struggled, the more energetically and elastically they pushed back at her; till all at once she was forced over the round, smooth edge, and fell.

To her terrified amazement, it was water she fell into. The pitcher was about half full of the chilly fluid. In her kickings and twistings she brought herself to the walls of her green prison, and tried to clamber out,--but here, again, were those cruel hairs on guard to foil her. She tried to evade them, to break them down, to bite them off with her strong, sharp mandibles. At last, by a supreme effort, she managed to drag herself almost clear,--but only to be at once hurled back, and far out into the water, by the sharp recoil of her tormentors.

Though pretty well exhausted by now, she would not give up the struggle; and presently her convulsive efforts brought her alongside of a refuge. It was only the floating body of a dead moth, but to the ant it was a safe and ample raft. Eagerly she crept out upon it, and lay very still for awhile, recovering her strength. More fortunate than most shipwrecked voyagers, she had an edible raft and was therefore in no imminent peril of starvation.

The light that came through the veined, translucent walls of this watery prison was of an exquisite cool beryl, very different from the warm daylight overhead. The ant had never been in any such surroundings

before, and was bewildered by the strangeness of them. After a brief rest she investigated minutely every corner of her queer retreat, and then, finding that there was nothing she could do to better the situation, she resumed her attitude of repose, with only the slight waving of her antennæ to show that she was awake.

For a long time nothing happened. No winds were astir that day, and no sounds came down into the pitcher save the shrill, happy chirping of birds in the surrounding bushes. But suddenly the pitcher began to tip and rock slightly, and the water to wash within its coloured walls. Something had alighted on the pitcher's lip.

It was something comparatively heavy, that was evident. A moment or two later it came sliding down those treacherous hairs, and fell into the water with a great splash which nearly swept the ant from her refuge.

The new arrival was a bee. And now began a tremendous turmoil within the narrow prison. The bee struggled, whirled around on the surface with thrashing wings, and sent the water swashing in every direction, till the ant was nearly drowned. She hung to her raft, however, and waited philosophically for the hubbub to subside. At length the bee too, after half a dozen vain and exhausting struggles to climb out against the opposing array of hairs, encountered the body of the dead moth. Instantly she tried to raise herself upon it, so as to escape the chill of the water and dry her wings for flight. But she was too heavy. The moth sank, and rolled over, at the same time being thrust against the wall of the pitcher. The ant, in high indignation clutched a bundle of the hostile hairs in her mandibles, and held herself at anchor against the wall.

Thoroughly used up, and stupid with panic and chill, the bee kept on futilely grappling with the moth's body, which, in its turn, kept on sinking and rolling beneath her. A very few minutes of such disastrous folly sufficed to end the struggle, and soon the bee was floating, drowned and motionless, beside the moth. Then the ant, with satisfaction, returned to her refuge.

When things get started happening, they are quite apt to keep it up for awhile, as if events invited events. A large hunting spider, creeping

among the grass and weeds, discovered the handsome cluster of the sarracenia. She was one of the few creatures who had learned the secret of the pitcher-plant and knew how to turn it to account. More than once had she found easy prey in some trapped insect struggling near the top of a well-filled pitcher.

Selecting the largest pitcher as the one most likely to yield results, the spider climbed its stem. Then she mounted the bright swell of the pitcher itself, whose smooth outer surface offered no obstacle to such visitors. The pitcher swayed and bowed. The water within washed heavily. And the ant, with new alarm, marked the big, black shadow of the spider creeping up the outside of her prison.

Having reached the lip of the leaf and cautiously crawled over upon it, the spider took no risks with those traitor hairs. She threw two or three stout cables of web across the lip; and then, with this secure anchorage by which to pull herself back, she ventured fearlessly down the steep of that perilous throat. One hooked claw, outstretched behind her, held aloft the cable which exuded from her spinnerets as she moved.

On the extreme of the slope she stopped, and her red, jewelled cluster of eyes glared fiercely down upon the little black ant. The latter shrank and crouched, and tried to hide herself under the side of the dead moth to escape the light of those baleful eyes. This new peril was one which appalled her far more than all the others she had encountered.

At this most critical of all crises in the destiny of the little black ant, the fickle Fortune of the Wild was seized with another whim. An overwhelming cataclysm descended suddenly upon the tiny world of the pitcher-plant. The soft, furry feet of some bounding monster--rabbit, fox, or wildcat--came down amongst the clustered pitchers, crushing several to bits and scattering wide the contents of all the rest. Among these latter was that which contained the little black ant. Drenched, astonished, but unhurt, she found herself lying in a tuft of splashed grass, once more free. Above her, on a grass-top, clung the bewildered spider. As it hung there, conspicuous to all the foraging world, a great black-and-yellow wasp pounced upon it, stung it into helplessness, and carried it off on heavily humming wing.



THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Chinese Fairy Book*, by Various

The Queen of Heaven, who is also known as the Holy Mother, was in mortal life a maiden of Fukien, named Lin. She was pure, reverential and pious in her ways and died at the age of seventeen. She shows her power on the seas and for this reason the seamen worship her. When they are unexpectedly attacked by wind and waves, they call on her and she is always ready to hear their pleas.

There are many seamen in Fukien, and every year people are lost at sea. And because of this, most likely, the Queen of Heaven took pity on the distress of her people during her lifetime on earth. And since her thoughts are uninterruptedly turned toward aiding the drowning in their distress, she now appears frequently on the seas.

In every ship that sails a picture of the Queen of Heaven hangs in the cabin, and three paper talismans are also kept on shipboard. On the first she is painted with crown and scepter, on the second as a maiden in ordinary dress, and on the third she is pictured with flowing hair, barefoot, standing with a sword in her hand. When the ship is in danger the first talisman is burnt, and help comes. But if this is of no avail, then the second and finally the third picture is burned. And if no help comes then there is nothing more to be done.

When seamen lose their course among wind and waves and darkling clouds, they pray devoutly to the Queen of Heaven. Then a red lantern appears on the face of the waters. And if they follow the lantern they will win safe out of all danger. The Queen of Heaven may often be seen standing in the skies, dividing the wind with her sword. When she does this the wind departs for the North and South, and the waves grow smooth.

A wooden wand is always kept before her holy picture in the cabin. It often happens that the fish-dragons play in the seas. They are two

giant fish who spout up water against one another till the sun in the sky is obscured, and the seas are shrouded in profound darkness. And often, in the distance, one may see a bright opening in the darkness. If the ship holds a course straight for this opening it will win through, and is suddenly floating in calm waters again. Looking back, one may see the two fishes still spouting water, and the ship will have passed directly beneath their jaws. But a storm is always near when the fish dragons swim; therefore it is well to burn paper or wool so that the dragons do not draw the ship down into the depths. Or the Master of the Wand may burn incense before the wand in the cabin. Then he must take the wand and swing it over the water three times, in a circle. If he does so the dragons will draw in their tails and disappear.

When the ashes in the censer fly up into the air without any cause, and are scattered about, it is a sign that great danger is threatening.

Nearly two-hundred years ago an army was fitted out to subdue the island of Formosa. The captain's banner had been dedicated with the blood of a white horse. Suddenly the Queen of Heaven appeared at the tip of the banner-staff. In another moment she had disappeared, but the invasion was successful.

On another occasion, in the days of Kien Lung, the minister Dschou Ling was ordered to install a new king in the Liu-Kiu Islands. When the fleet was sailing by south of Korea, a storm arose, and his ship was driven toward the Black Whirlpool. The water had the color of ink, sun and moon lost their radiance, and the word was passed about that the ship had been caught in the Black Whirlpool, from which no living man had ever returned. The seaman and travelers awaited their end with lamentations. Suddenly an untold number of lights, like red lanterns, appeared on the surface of the water. Then the seamen were overjoyed and prayed in the cabins. "Our lives are saved!" they cried, "the Holy Mother has come to our aid!" And truly, a beautiful maiden with golden earrings appeared. She waved her hand in the air and the winds became still and the waves grew even. And it seemed as though the ship were being drawn along by a mighty hand. It moved plashing through the waves, and suddenly it was beyond the limits of the Black Whirlpool.

Dschou Ling on his return told of this happening, and begged that temples be erected in honor of the Queen of Heaven, and that she be included in the list of the gods. And the emperor granted his prayer.

Since then temples of the Queen of Heaven are to be found in all sea-port towns, and her birthday is celebrated on the eighth day of the fourth month with spectacles and sacrifices.

Note: "The Queen of Heaven," whose name is Tian Hou, or more exactly, Tian Fe Niang Niang, is a Taoist goddess of seamen, generally worshiped in all coast towns. Her story is principally made up of local legends of Fukien province, and a variation of the Indian Maritschi (who as Dschunti with the eight arms, is the object of quite a special cult). Tian Hou, since the establishment of the Manchu dynasty, is one of the officially recognized godheads.



THE RAIL FENCE STORY

Project Gutenberg's *The Sandman: His Farm Stories*, by William J. Hopkins

Once upon a time there was a farm-house, and it was painted white and had green blinds; and it stood not far from the road. In the fence was a wide gate to let the wagons through to the barn. And the wagons, going through, had made a track that led up past the kitchen door and past the shed and past the barn and past the orchard to the wheat-field; and through the wheat-field to the maple-sugar woods.

All about were other fields; and one of them was a great enormous field where Uncle John used to let the horses and cows go to eat the grass, after he had got the hay in. This field was so big that Uncle John

thought it would be better if it was made into two fields. He couldn't put a stone wall across it, because all the stones in the field had been made into the wall that went around the outside. So he thought an easy way would be to put a rail fence across.

So, one day, when it was winter and snow was on the ground, Uncle John and Uncle Solomon took their axes and walked along the little track, past the barn and past the orchard, and climbed over the bars into the wheat-field. Then they walked across the wheat-field and climbed over the bars into the maple-sugar woods; and they walked along the road in the woods until they came to a place where were some trees that were just the right size to make rails and posts. They were not maple-sugar trees, but a different kind.

Then they cut down enough of these trees to make all the rails and all the posts they wanted; and they cut off all the branches and they cut some of the trees into logs that were just long enough for rails, and they cut the other trees into logs that were just long enough for posts. Then they took the rail logs and with their axes they split each one all along from one end to the other, until it was in six pieces. Each piece was a rail. But the post logs they didn't split.

Then they left the logs and the rails lying there and walked back, and climbed over into the wheat-field, and went across the wheat-field and climbed over at the other side, and walked past the orchard and past the barn and past the shed and went in at the kitchen door.

The next morning, Uncle John got out the old oxen, and they put their heads down low, and he put the yoke over and the bows under, and hooked the tongue of the sled to the yoke. Then he said: "Gee up there," and they started walking slowly along, past the barn and past the orchard to the wheat-field; and Uncle John took down the bars and they walked across the wheat-field, and he took down the bars at the other side. Then the old oxen walked through the gate and along the road to the place where the post logs and the rails were; and Uncle Solomon had come too, and little John. But they didn't let little John come when they cut the trees down, because they were afraid he might get hurt.

Then Uncle Solomon and Uncle John piled the rails on the sled, and the

post logs on top, and the old oxen started and walked along the road and through into the wheat-field and across the field, and Uncle John put the bars up after the oxen had gone through the gates. Then they dragged the sled along past the orchard and past the barn to the shed. There they stopped and Uncle John and Uncle Solomon took off the logs and the rails. The rails were piled up under the shed, to dry; but the logs they had to make square, and holes had to be bored in them before they would be posts. Then Uncle John unhooked the tongue of the sled from the yoke and took off the yoke, and the old oxen went into the barn.

The next day, Uncle John took an axe that was a queer shape, and he made the post logs square. Then he bored the holes in the logs for the rails to go in, and piled the posts up under the shed. They were all ready to set into the ground, but the ground was frozen hard, and they couldn't be set until the winter was over and the ground was soft.

After the winter was over and it was getting warm, the ground melted out and got soft. Then Uncle John and Uncle Solomon took a crowbar--a great, heavy iron bar with a sharp end--and a shovel, and they went to the great enormous field. Then they saw where they wanted the fence to be, and they dug a lot of holes in the ground, all in a row, to put the posts in.

Then they went back and Uncle John got out the oxen and put the yoke over and the bows under and hooked the tongue of the cart to the yoke. On the cart they piled the posts, and there were so many they had to come back for another load. Then the oxen started and walked down the little track and out through the wide gate into the road, and along the road to the great enormous field where the holes were all dug for the posts. Then Uncle Solomon and Uncle John put the posts in the holes and pounded the dirt down hard.

Then the oxen walked back along the road to the farm-house and in at the gate and up to the shed. And Uncle John put the rails on the cart and the oxen walked back to the field again and in beside the row of posts. And Uncle John took the rails off the cart and put them in the holes in the posts, so that they went across from one post to the next. And in each post were four holes, and four rails went across.

Then the oxen went a little farther and the rails were put in between the next posts, and so on until the rails reached all the way across the field, and the fence was done. And when Uncle John wanted the cows or the horses to go through, he could take down the rails at any part of the fence.

Then the old oxen started walking back out of the field into the road and along the road to the farm-house. And they went in at the wide gate and up the track past the kitchen door to the shed, and there they stopped.

And Uncle John unhooked the tongue of the cart from the yoke and put the cart in the shed. And he took off the yoke and the old oxen went into the barn and went to sleep.

And that's all.



THE SILVER HEN.

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Pot of Gold*, by Mary E. Wilkins

Dame Dorothea Penny kept a private school. It was quite a small school, on account of the small size of her house. She had only twelve scholars and they filled it quite full; indeed one very little boy had to sit in the brick oven. On this account Dame Penny was obliged to do all her cooking on a Saturday when school did not keep; on that day she baked bread, and cakes, and pies enough to last a week. The oven was a very large one.

It was on a Saturday that Dame Penny first missed her silver hen. She owned a wonderful silver hen, whose feathers looked exactly as if they had been dipped in liquid silver. When she was scratching for worms out in the yard, and the sun shone on her, she was absolutely

dazzling, and sent little bright reflections into the neighbors' windows, as if she were really solid silver.

Dame Penny had a sunny little coop with a padlocked door for her, and she always locked it very carefully every night. So it was doubly perplexing when the hen disappeared. Dame Penny remembered distinctly locking the coop-door; several circumstances had served to fix it on her mind. She had started out without her overshoes, then had returned for them because the snow was quite deep and she was liable to rheumatism. Then Dame Louisa who lived next door had rapped on her window, and she had run in there for a few moments with the hen-coop key dangling on its blue ribbon from her wrist, and Dame Louisa had remarked that she would lose that key if she were not more careful. Then when she returned home across the yard a doubt had seized her, and she had tried the coop-door to be sure that she had really fastened it.

The next morning when she fitted the key into the padlock and threw open the door, and no silver hen came clucking out, it was very mysterious. Dame Louisa came running to the fence which divided her yard from Dame Penny's, and stood leaning on it with her apron over her head.

"Are you sure that hen was in the coop when you locked the door?" said she.

"Of course she was in the coop," replied Dame Penny with dignity. "She has never failed to go in there at sundown for all the twenty-five years that I've had her."

Dame Penny carefully searched everywhere about the premises. When the scholars assembled she called the school to order, and told them of her terrible loss. All the scholars crooked their arms over their faces and wept, for they were very fond of Dame Penny, and also of the silver hen. Every one of them wore one of her silver tail-feathers in the best bonnet, or hat, as the case might be. The silver hen had dropped them about the yard, and Dame Penny had presented them from time to time as rewards for good behavior.

After Dame Penny had told the school, she tried to proceed with the usual exercises. But in vain. She whipped one little boy because he said that four and three made seven, and she stood a little girl in the corner because she spelled hen with one _n_.

Finally she dismissed the scholars, and gave them permission to search for the silver hen. She offered the successful one the most beautiful Christmas present he had ever seen. It was about three weeks before Christmas.

The children all put on their things, and went home and told their parents what they were going to do; then they started upon the search for the silver hen. They searched with no success till the day before Christmas. Then they thought they would ask Dame Louisa, who had the reputation of being quite a wise woman, if she knew of any more likely places in which they could hunt.

The twelve scholars walked two by two up to Dame Louisa's front door, and knocked. They were very quiet and spoke only in whispers because they knew Dame Louisa was nervous, and did not like children very well. Indeed it was a great cross to her that she lived so near the school, for the scholars when out in their own yard never thought about her nervousness, and made a deal of noise. Then too she could hear every time they spelled or said the multiplication-table, or bounded the countries of Africa, and it was very trying. To-day in spite of their efforts to be quiet they awoke her from a nap, and she came to the door, with her front-piece and cap on one side, and her spectacles over her eyebrows, very much out of humor.

"I don't know where you'll find the hen," said she peevishly, "unless you go to the White Woods for it."

"Thank you, ma'am," said the children with curtesies, and they all turned and went down the path between the dead Christmas-trees.

Dame Louisa had no idea that they would go to the White Woods. She had said it quite at random, although she was so vexed in being disturbed in her nap that she wished for a moment that they would. She stood in her front door and looked at her dead Christmas-trees, and that

always made her feel crosser, and she had not at any time a pleasant disposition. Indeed, it was rumored among the towns-people that that had blasted her Christmas-trees, that Dame Louisa's scolding, fretting voice had floated out to them, and smote their delicate twigs like a bitter frost and made them turn yellow; for the real Christmas-tree is not very hardy.

No one else in the village, probably no one else in the county, owned any such tree, alive or dead. Dame Louisa's husband, who had been a sea-captain, had brought them from foreign parts. They were mere little twigs when they planted them on the first day of January, but they were full-grown and loaded with fruit by the next Christmas-day. Every Christmas they were cut down and sold, but they always grew again to their full height, in a year's time. They were not, it is true, the regulation Christmas-tree. That is they were not loaded with different and suitable gifts for every one in a family, as they stood there in Dame Louisa's yard. People always tied on those, after they had bought them, and had set them up in their own parlors. But these trees bore regular fruit like apple, or peach, or plum-trees, only there was a considerable variety in it. These trees when in full fruitage were festooned with strings of pop-corn, and weighed down with apples and oranges and figs and bags of candy, and it was really an amazing sight to see them out there in Dame Louisa's front yard. But now they were all yellow and dead, and not so much as one pop-corn whitened the upper branches, neither was there one candle shining out in the night. For the trees in their prime had borne also little twinkling lights like wax candles.

Dame Louisa looked out at her dead Christmas-trees, and scowled. She could see the children out in the road, and they were trudging along in the direction of the White Woods. "Let 'em go," she snapped to herself. "I guess they won't go far. I'll be rid of their noise, any way."

She could hear poor Dame Penny's distressed voice out in her yard, calling "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy;" and she scowled more fiercely than ever. "I'm glad she's lost her old silver hen," she muttered to herself. She had always suspected the silver hen of pecking at the roots of the Christmas-trees and so causing them to blast; then, too,

the silver hen had used to stand on the fence and crow; for, unlike other hens, she could crow very beautifully, and that had disturbed her.

Dame Louisa had a very wise book, which she had consulted to find the reason for the death of her Christmas-trees, but all she could find in it was one short item, which did not satisfy her at all. The book was on the plan of an encyclopedia, and she, having turned to the "ch's," found:

"Christmas-trees--very delicate when transplanted, especially sensitive, and liable to blast at any change in the moral atmosphere. Remedy: discover and confess the cause."

After reading this, Dame Louisa was always positive that Dame Penny's silver hen was at the root of the mischief, for she knew that she herself had never done anything to hurt the trees.

Dame Penny was so occupied in calling "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy," and shaking a little pan of corn, that she never noticed the children taking the road toward the White Woods. If she had done so she would have stopped them, for the White Woods was considered a very dangerous place. It was called white because it was always white even in midsummer. The trees and bushes, and all the undergrowth, every flower and blade of grass, were white with snow and frost all the year round, and all the learned men of the country had studied into the reason of it, and had come to the conclusion that the Woods lay in a direct draught from the North Pole and that produced the phenomenon. Nobody had penetrated very far into the White Woods, although many expeditions had been organized for that purpose. The cold was so terrible that it drove them back.

The children had heard all about the terrors of the White Woods. When they drew near it they took hold of one another's hands and snuggled as closely together as possible.

When they struck into the path at the entrance the intense cold turned their cheeks and noses blue in a moment, but they kept on, calling "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!" in their shrill sweet trebles. Every twig on

the trees was glittering white with hoar-frost, and all the dead blackberry-vines wore white wreaths, the bushes brushed the ground, they were so heavy with ice, and the air was full of fine white sparkles. The children's eyes were dazzled, but they kept on, stumbling through the icy vines and bushes, and calling "_Biddy, Biddy, Biddy_!"

It was quite late in the afternoon when they started, and pretty soon the sun went down and the moon arose, and that made it seem colder. It was like traveling through a forest of solid silver then, and every once in a while a little frozen clump of flowers would shine so that they would think it was the silver hen and dart forward, to find it was not.

About two hours after the moon arose, as they were creeping along, calling "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!" more and more faintly, a singular, hoarse voice replied suddenly. "We don't keep any hens," said the voice, and all the children jumped and screamed, and looked about for the owner of it. He loomed up among some bushes at their right. He was so dazzling white himself, and had such an indistinctness of outline, that they had taken him for an oak-tree. But it was the real Snow Man. They knew him in a moment, he looked so much like his effigies that they used to make in their yards.

"We don't keep any hens," repeated the Snow Man. "What are you calling hens for in this forest?"

The children huddled together as close as they could, and the oldest boy explained. When he broke down the oldest girl piped up and helped him.

"Well," said the Snow Man, "I haven't seen the silver hen. I never did see any hens in these woods, but she may be around here for all that. You had better go home with me and spend the night. My wife will be delighted to see you. We have never had any company in our lives, and she is always scolding about it."

The children looked at each other and shook harder than they had done with cold.

"I'm--afraid our mothers--wouldn't--like to have us," stammered the oldest boy.

"Nonsense," cried the Snow Man. "Here I have been visiting you, time and time again, and stood whole days out in your front yards, and you've never been to see me. I think it is about time that I had some return. Come along." With that the Snow Man seized the right ear of the oldest boy between a finger and thumb, and danced him along, and all the rest, trembling, and whimpering under their breaths, followed.

It was not long before they reached the Snow Man's house, which was really quite magnificent: a castle built of blocks of ice fitted together like bricks, and with two splendid snow-lions keeping guard at the entrance. The Snow Man's wife stood in the door, and the Snow Children stood behind her and peeped around her skirts; they were smiling from ear to ear. They had never seen any company before, and they were so delighted that they did not know what to do.

"We have some company, wife," shouted the Snow Man.

"Bring them right in," said his wife with a beaming face. She was very handsome, with beautiful pink cheeks and blue eyes, and she wore a trailing white robe, like a queen. She kissed the children all around, and shivers crept down their backs, for it was like being kissed by an icicle. "Kiss your company, my dears," she said to the Snow Children, and they came bashfully forward and kissed Dame Penny's scholars with these same chilly kisses.

"Now," said the Snow Man's wife, "come right in and sit down where it is cool--you look very hot."

"Hot," when the poor scholars were quite stiff with cold! They looked at one another in dismay, but did not dare say anything. They followed the Snow Man's wife into her grand parlor.

"Come right over here by the north window where it is cooler," said she, "and the children shall bring you some fans."

The Snow Children floated up with fans--all the Snow Man's family had a lovely floating gait--and the scholars took them with feeble curtesies, and began fanning. A stiff north wind blew in at the windows. The forest was all creaking and snapping with the cold. The poor children, fanning themselves, on an ice divan, would certainly have frozen if the Snow Man's wife had not suggested that they all have a little game of "puss-in-the-corner," to while away the time before dinner. That warmed them up a little, for they had to run very fast indeed to play with the Snow Children who seemed to fairly blow in the north wind from corner to corner.

But the Snow Man's wife stopped the play a little before dinner was announced; she said the guests looked so warm that she was alarmed, and was afraid they might melt.

A whistle, that sounded just like the whistle of the north wind in the chimney, blew for dinner, and Dame Penny's scholars thought with delight that now they would have something warm. But every dish on the Snow Man's table was cold and frozen, and the Snow Man's wife kept urging them to eat this and that, because it was so nice and cooling, and they looked so warm.

After dinner they were colder than ever, even. Another game of "puss-in-the-corner" did not warm them much; they were glad when the Snow Man's wife suggested that they go to bed, for they had visions of warm blankets and comfortables. But when they were shown into the great north chamber, that was more like a hall than a chamber, with its walls of solid ice, its ice floor and its ice beds, their hearts sank. Not a blanket nor comfortable was to be seen; there were great silk bags stuffed with snow flakes instead of feathers on the beds, and that was all.

"If you are too warm in the night, and feel as if you were going to melt," said the Snow Man's wife, "you can open the south window and that will make a draught--there are none but the north windows open now."

The scholars curtesied and bade her good-night, and she kissed them and hoped they would sleep well. Then she trailed her splendid robe,

which was decorated with real frost embroidery, down the ice stairs and left her guests to themselves. They were frantic with cold and terror, and the little ones began to cry. They talked over the situation and agreed that they had better wait until the house was quiet and then run away. So they waited until they thought everybody must be asleep, and then cautiously stole toward the door. It was locked fast on the outside. The Snow Man's wife had slipped an icicle through the latch. Then they were in despair. It seemed as if they must freeze to death before morning. But it occurred to some of the older ones that they had heard their parents say that snow was really warm, and people had been kept warm and alive by burrowing under snow-drifts. And as there were enough snow-flake beds to use for coverlids also, they crept under them, having first shut the north windows, and were soon quite comfortable.

In the meantime there was a great panic in the village; the children's parents were nearly wild. They came running to Dame Penny, but she was calling "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!" out in the moonlight, and knew nothing about them. Then they called outside Dame Louisa's window, but she pretended to be asleep, although she was really awake, and in a terrible panic.

She did not tell the parents how the children had gone to the White Woods, because she knew that they could not extricate them from the difficulty as well as she could herself. She knew all about the Snow Man and his wife, and how very anxious they were to have company.

So just as soon as the parents were gone and she heard their voices in the distance, she dressed herself, harnessed her old white horse into the great box-sleigh, got out all the tubs and pails that she had in the house, and went over to Dame Penny, who was still standing out in her front yard calling the silver hen and the children by turns.

"Come, Dame Penny," said Dame Louisa, "I want you to go with me to the White Woods and rescue the children. Bring out all the tubs and pails you have in the house, and we will pump them full of water."

"The pails--full of water--what for?" gasped Dame Penny.

"To thaw them out," replied Dame Louisa; "they will very likely be wholly or partly frozen, and I have always heard that cold water was the only remedy to use."

Dame Penny said no more. She brought out all her tubs and pails, and they pumped them and Dame Louisa's full of water, and packed them into the sleigh--there were twelve of them. Then they climbed into the seat, slapped the reins over the back of the old white horse, and started off for the White Woods.

On the way Dame Louisa wept, and confessed what she had done to Dame Penny. "I have been a cross, selfish old woman," said she, "and I think that is the reason why my Christmas-trees were blasted. I don't believe your silver hen touched them."

She and Dame Penny called "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!" and the names of the children, all the way. Dame Louisa drove straight to the Snow Man's house.

"They are more likely to be there than anywhere else, the Snow Man and his wife are so crazy to have company," said she.

When they arrived at the house, Dame Louisa left Dame Penny to hold the horse, and went in. The outer door was not locked and she wandered quite at her will, through the great ice saloons, and wind-swept corridors. When she came to the door with the icicle through the latch, she knew at once that the children were in that room, so she drew out the icicle and entered. The children were asleep, but she aroused them, and bade them be very quiet and follow her. They got out of the house without disturbing any of the family; but, once out, a new difficulty beset them. The children had been so nearly warm under their snow-flake beds that they began to freeze the minute the icy air struck them.

But Dame Louisa promptly seized them, while Dame Penny held the horse, and put them into the tubs and pails of water. Then she took hold of the horse's head, and backed him and turned around carefully, and they started off at full speed.

But it was not long before they discovered that they were pursued. They heard the hoarse voice of the Snow Man behind them calling to them to stop.

"What are you taking away my company for?" shouted the Snow Man.
"Stop, stop!"

The wind was at the back of the Snow Man, and he came with tremendous velocity. It was evident that he would soon overtake the old white horse who was stiff and somewhat lame. Dame Louisa whipped him up, but the Snow Man gained on them. The icy breath of the Snow Man blew over them. "Oh!" shrieked Dame Penny, "what shall we do, what shall we do?"

"Be quiet," said Dame Louisa with dignity. She untied her large poke-bonnet which was made of straw--she was unable to have a velvet one for winter, now her Christmas-trees were dead--and she hung it on the whip. Then she drew a match from her pocket, and set fire to the bonnet. The light fabric blazed up directly, and the Snow Man stopped short. "If you come any nearer," shrieked Dame Louisa, "I'll put this right in your face and--melt you!"

"Give me back my company," shouted the Snow Man in a doubtful voice.

"You can't have your company," said Dame Louisa, shaking the blazing bonnet defiantly at him.

"To think of the days I've spent in their yards, slowly melting and suffering everything, and my not having one visit back," grumbled the Snow Man. But he stood still; he never took a step forward after Dame Louisa had set her bonnet on fire.

It was lucky Dame Louisa had worn a worsted scarf tied over her bonnet, and could now use it for a bonnet.

The cold was intense, and had it not been that Dame Penny and Dame Louisa both wore their Bay State shawls over their beaver sacques, and their stone-marten tippets and muffs, and blue worsted stockings drawn over their shoes, they would certainly have frozen. As for the children, they would never have reached home alive if it had not been

for the pails and tubs of water.

"Do you feel as if you were thawing?" Dame Louisa asked the children after they had left the Snow Man behind.

"Yes, ma'am," said they.

Dame Louisa drove as fast as she could, with thankful tears running down her cheeks. "I've been a wicked, cross old woman," said she again and again, "and that is what blasted my Christmas-trees."

It was the dawn of Christmas-day when they came in sight of Dame Louisa's house.

"Oh! what is that twinkling out in the yard?" cried the children.

They could all see little fairy-like lights twinkling out in Dame Louisa's yard.

"It looks just as the Christmas-trees used to," said Dame Penny.

"Oh! I can't believe it," cried Dame Louisa, her heart beating wildly.

But when they came opposite the yard, they saw that it was true. Dame Louisa's Christmas-trees stood there all twinkling with lights, and covered with trailing garlands of pop-corn, oranges, apples, and candy-bags; their yellow branches had turned green and the Christmas-trees were in full glory.

"Oh! what is that shining so out in Dame Penny's yard?" cried the children, who were entirely thawed, and only needed to get home to their parents and have some warm breakfast, and Christmas-presents, to be quite themselves. "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!" cried Dame Penny, and Dame Louisa and the children chimed in, calling, "Biddy, Biddy, Biddy!"

It was indeed the silver hen, and following her were twelve little silver chickens. She had stolen a nest in Dame Louisa's barn and nobody had known it until she appeared on Christmas morning with her brood of silver chickens.

"Every scholar shall have one of the silver chickens for a Christmas present," said Dame Penny.

"And each shall have one of my Christmas-trees," said Dame Louisa.

Then all the scholars cried out with delight, the Christmas-bells in the village began to ring, the silver hen flew up on the fence and crowed, the sun shone broadly out, and it was a merry Christmas-day.



THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Green Fairy Book*, by Various

There was once upon a time a pig who lived with her three children on a large, comfortable, old-fashioned farmyard. The eldest of the little pigs was called Brownny, the second Whitey, and the youngest and best looking Blacky. Now Brownny was a very dirty little pig, and I am sorry to say spent most of his time rolling and wallowing about in the mud. He was never so happy as on a wet day, when the mud in the farmyard got soft, and thick, and slab. Then he would steal away from his mother's side, and finding the muddiest place in the yard, would roll about in it and thoroughly enjoy himself. His mother often found fault with him for this, and would shake her head sadly and say: 'Ah, Brownny! some day you will be sorry that you did not obey your old mother.' But no words of advice or warning could cure Brownny of his bad habits.

Whitey was quite a clever little pig, but she was greedy. She was always thinking of her food, and looking forward to her dinner; and when the farm girl was seen carrying the pails across the yard, she would rise up on her hind legs and dance and caper with excitement. As soon as the food was poured into the trough she jostled Blacky and Brownny out of the way in her eagerness to get the best and biggest bits for herself. Her mother often scolded her for her selfishness, and told her that some day

she would suffer for being so greedy and grabbing.

Blacky was a good, nice little pig, neither dirty nor greedy. He had nice dainty ways (for a pig), and his skin was always as smooth and shining as black satin. He was much cleverer than Brownny and Whitey, and his mother's heart used to swell with pride when she heard the farmer's friends say to each other that some day the little black fellow would be a prize pig.

Now the time came when the mother pig felt old and feeble and near her end. One day she called the three little pigs round her and said:

'My children, I feel that I am growing odd and weak, and that I shall not live long. Before I die I should like to build a house for each of you, as this dear old sty in which we have lived so happily will be given to a new family of pigs, and you will have to turn out. Now, Brownny, what sort of a house would you like to have?'

'A house of mud,' replied Brownny, looking longingly at a wet puddle in the corner of the yard.

'And you, Whitey?' said the mother pig in rather a sad voice, for she was disappointed that Brownny had made so foolish a choice.

'A house of cabbage,' answered Whitey, with a mouth full, and scarcely raising her snout out of the trough in which she was grubbing for some potato-parings.

'Foolish, foolish child!' said the mother pig, looking quite distressed. 'And you, Blacky?' turning to her youngest son, 'what sort of a house shall I order for you?'

'A house of brick, please mother, as it will be warm in winter, and cool in summer, and safe all the year round.'

'That is a sensible little pig,' replied his mother, looking fondly at him. 'I will see that the three houses are got ready at once. And now one last piece of advice. You have heard me talk of our old enemy the fox. When he hears that I am dead, he is sure to try and get hold of

you, to carry you off to his den. He is very sly and will no doubt disguise himself, and pretend to be a friend, but you must promise me not to let him enter your houses on any pretext whatever.'

And the little pigs readily promised, for they had always had a great fear of the fox, of whom they had heard many terrible tales. A short time afterwards the old pig died, and the little pigs went to live in their own houses.

Brownny was quite delighted with his soft mud walls and with the clay floor, which soon looked like nothing but a big mud pie. But that was what Brownny enjoyed, and he was as happy as possible, rolling about all day and making himself in such a mess. One day, as he was lying half asleep in the mud, he heard a soft knock at his door, and a gentle voice said:

'May I come in, Master Brownny? I want to see your beautiful new house.'

'Who are you?' said Brownny, starting up in great fright, for though the voice sounded gentle, he felt sure it was a feigned voice, and he feared it was the fox.

'I am a friend come to call on you,' answered the voice.

'No, no,' replied Brownny, 'I don't believe you are a friend. You are the wicked fox, against whom our mother warned us. I won't let you in.'

'Oho! is that the way you answer me?' said the fox, speaking very roughly in his natural voice. 'We shall soon see who is master here,' and with his paws he set to work and scraped a large hole in the soft mud walls. A moment later he had jumped through it, and catching Brownny by the neck, flung him on his shoulders and trotted off with him to his den.

The next day, as Whitey was munching a few leaves of cabbage out of the corner of her house, the fox stole up to her door, determined to carry her off to join her brother in his den. He began speaking to her in the same feigned gentle voice in which he had spoken to Brownny; but it frightened her very much when he said:

'I am a friend come to visit you, and to have some of your good cabbage for my dinner.'

'Please don't touch it,' cried Whitey in great distress. 'The cabbages are the walls of my house, and if you eat them you will make a hole, and the wind and rain will come in and give me a cold. Do go away; I am sure you are not a friend, but our wicked enemy the fox.' And poor Whitey began to whine and to whimper, and to wish that she had not been such a greedy little pig, and had chosen a more solid material than cabbages for her house. But it was too late now, and in another minute the fox had eaten his way through the cabbage walls, and had caught the trembling, shivering Whitey, and carried her off to his den.

The next day the fox started off for Blacky's house, because he had made up his mind that he would get the three little pigs together in his den, and then kill them, and invite all his friends to a feast. But when he reached the brick house, he found that the door was bolted and barred, so in his sly manner he began, 'Do let me in, dear Blacky. I have brought you a present of some eggs that I picked up in a farmyard on my way here.'

'No, no, Mister Fox,' replied Blacky, 'I am not going to open my door to you. I know your cunning ways. You have carried off poor Brownie and Whitey, but you are not going to get me.'

At this the fox was so angry that he dashed with all his force against the wall, and tried to knock it down. But it was too strong and well-built; and though the fox scraped and tore at the bricks with his paws he only hurt himself, and at last he had to give it up, and limp away with his fore-paws all bleeding and sore.

'Never mind!' he cried angrily as he went off, 'I'll catch you another day, see if I don't, and won't I grind your bones to powder when I have got you in my den!' and he snarled fiercely and showed his teeth.

Next day Blacky had to go into the neighbouring town to do some marketing and to buy a big kettle. As he was walking home with it slung over his shoulder, he heard a sound of steps stealthily creeping after

him. For a moment his heart stood still with fear, and then a happy thought came to him. He had just reached the top of a hill, and could see his own little house nestling at the foot of it among the trees. In a moment he had snatched the lid off the kettle and had jumped in himself. Coiling himself round he lay quite snug in the bottom of the kettle, while with his fore-leg he managed to put the lid on, so that he was entirely hidden. With a little kick from the inside he started the kettle off, and down the hill it rolled full tilt; and when the fox came up, all that he saw was a large black kettle spinning over the ground at a great pace. Very much disappointed, he was just going to turn away, when he saw the kettle stop close to the little brick house, and in a moment later Blacky jumped out of it and escaped with the kettle into the house, when he barred and bolted the door, and put the shutter up over the window.

'Oho!' exclaimed the fox to himself, 'you think you will escape me that way, do you? We shall soon see about that, my friend,' and very quietly and stealthily he prowled round the house looking for some way to climb on to the roof.

In the meantime Blacky had filled the kettle with water, and having put it on the fire, sat down quietly waiting for it to boil. Just as the kettle was beginning to sing, and steam to come out of the spout, he heard a sound like a soft, muffled step, patter, patter, patter overhead, and the next moment the fox's head and fore-paws were seen coming down the chimney. But Blacky very wisely had not put the lid on the kettle, and, with a yelp of pain, the fox fell into the boiling water, and before he could escape, Blacky had popped the lid on, and the fox was scalded to death.

As soon as he was sure that their wicked enemy was really dead, and could do them no further harm, Blacky started off to rescue Brownny and Whitey. As he approached the den he heard piteous grunts and squeals from his poor little brother and sister who lived in constant terror of the fox killing and eating them. But when they saw Blacky appear at the entrance to the den their joy knew no bounds. He quickly found a sharp stone and cut the cords by which they were tied to a stake in the ground, and then all three started off together for Blacky's house, where they lived happily ever after; and Brownny quite gave up rolling

in the mud, and Whitey ceased to be greedy, for they never forgot how nearly these faults had brought them to an untimely end.



THE UNDECIDED RATTLESNAKE

Project Gutenberg's *Among the Forest People*, by Clara Dillingham Pierson

It is not often that one of the Forest People has any trouble about making up his mind, but there was one large Rattlesnake who had great difficulty in doing so. She lived in the southern edge of the forest, where the sunshine was clear and warm, and there were delightful crevices among the rocks in which she and all her friends and relatives could hide.

It seemed very strange that so old a Snake should be so undecided as she was. It must be that she had a careless mother who did not bring her up in the right way. If that were so, one should indeed be sorry for her. Still even that would be no real excuse, for was she not old enough now to train herself? She had seven joints in the rattle on her tail and an eighth one growing, so you can see that she was no longer young, although, being healthy, she had grown her new joints and changed her skin oftener than some of her friends. In fact, she had grown children of her own, and if it had not been that they took after their father, they would have been a most helpless family. Fortunately for them, their father was a very decided Snake.

Yes, it was exceedingly lucky for them. It may not have been so good a thing for him. His wife was always glad to have things settled for her, and when he said, "We will do this," she answered, "Yes, dear." When he said, "We will not do that," she murmured, "No, dear." And when he said, "What shall we do?" she would reply, "Oh, I don't know. What do you think we might better do?" He did not very often ask her opinion,

and there were people in the forest who said he would never have talked matters over with her if he had not known that she would leave the decision to him.

Now this is a bad way in which to have things go in any family, and it happened here as it would anywhere. He grew more and more selfish from having his own way all of the time, and his wife became less and less able to take care of herself. Most people thought him a very devoted husband. Perhaps he was. It is easy to be a devoted husband if you always have your own way.

One night Mr. Rattlesnake did not return to their home. Nobody ever knew what had become of him. The Red Squirrel said that Mrs. Goldfinch said that the biggest little Rabbit had told her that the Ground Hog had overheard Mr. Crow say that he thought he saw somebody that looked like Mr. Rattlesnake chasing a Field Mouse over toward the farm, but that he might have been mistaken. This was all so uncertain that Mrs. Rattlesnake knew no more than she had known before. It was very trying.

"If I only knew positively," she said to her friend, Mrs. Striped Snake, "I could do something, although I am sure I don't know what it would be."

Mrs. Striped Snake tried to help her. "Why not have one of your children come home to live with you?" she said pleasantly, for this year's children were now old enough to shift for themselves.

"I've thought of that," answered Mrs. Rattlesnake, "but I like a quiet life, and you know how it is. Young Snakes will be young Snakes. Besides, I don't think they would want to come back."

"Well, why not be alone, then?"

"Oh, it is so lonely," replied Mrs. Rattlesnake, with a sigh.

"Everything reminds me so of my husband, and that makes me sad. If I lived somewhere else it would be different."

"Then why not move?" said Mrs. Striped Snake, briskly. "I would do that. Find a nice crack in the rock just big enough for one, or make a cosy

little hole in the ground somewhere near here. Then if he comes back he can find you easily. I would do that. I certainly would."

She spoke so firmly that Mrs. Rattlesnake said she would, she would to-morrow. And her friend went home thinking it was all settled. That shows how little she really knew Mrs. Rattlesnake.

The more Mrs. Rattlesnake thought it over that night, the more she dreaded moving. "If he does not come back," she sighed, "I may marry again in the spring, and then I might have to move once more. I believe I will ask somebody else what I ought to do."

So in the morning she began to consult her friends. They all told her to move, and she decided to do it. Then she could not make up her mind whether to take a rock-crevice or make a hole in the ground. It took another day of visiting to settle that it should be a hole in the ground. A fourth day was spent in finding just the right place for her home, and on the fifth day she began work.

By the time the sun was over the tree-tops, she wished she had chosen some other place, and thought best to stop and talk to some of her friends about it. When she returned she found herself obliged to cast her skin, which had been growing tight and dry for some time. This was hard work, and she was too tired to go on with her home-making, so she lay in the sunshine and admired her beautiful, long, and shining body of reddish brown spotted with black. Her rattle had eight joints now, for when a Rattlesnake casts the old skin a new joint is always uncovered at the end of the tail. She waved it quickly to see how an eight-jointed rattle would sound. "Lovely!" she said. "Lovely! Like the seeds of the wild cucumber shaking around in their dry and prickly case."

One could not tell all the things that happened that fall, or how very, very, very tired her friends became of having her ask their advice. She changed her mind more times than there are seeds in a milkweed pod, and the only thing of which she was always sure was eating. When there was food in sight she did not stop for anybody's advice. She ate it as fast as she could, and if she had any doubts about the wisdom of doing so, she kept them to herself.

When winter came she had just got her new home ready, and after all she went when invited to spend the winter with a cave party of other Snakes. They coiled themselves together in a great mass and slept there until spring. As the weather grew warmer, they began to stir, wriggling and twisting themselves free.

Two bachelor Snakes asked her to marry. One was a fine old fellow with a twelve-jointed rattle. The other was just her own age.

"To be sure I will," she cried, and the pits between her nostrils and her ears looked more like dimples than ever. "Only you must wait until I can make up my mind which one to marry."

"Oh, no," they answered, "don't go to all that trouble. We will fight and decide it for you."

It was a long fight, and the older of the two Snakes had a couple of joints broken off from his rattle before it was over. Still he beat the other one and drove him away. When he came back for his bride he found her crying. "What is the matter?" said he, quite sternly.

"Oh, that p-poor other b-bachelor!" she sobbed. "I b-believe I will g-go after him. I think p-perhaps I l-love him the b-better."

"No, you don't, Mrs. Rattlesnake," said the fine old fellow who had just won the fight. "You will do no such thing. You will marry me and never speak to him again. When I have lost two joints of my rattle in fighting for you, I intend to have you myself, and _I_ say that you love me very dearly. Do you hear?"

"Yes, darling," she answered, as she wiped her eyes on the grass, "very dearly." And they lived most happily together.

"He reminds me so much of the first Mr. Rattlesnake," she said to her friends. "So strong, so firm, so quick to decide!"

And the friends said to each other, "Well, let us be thankful he is. We have been bothered enough by her coming to us for advice which she never followed."



VICTORY, by Walter F. White

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *The Upward Path*, by Various

"Now, Ted, just forget they're after you and remember you've got ten men out there with you. Fight 'em and fight 'em hard, but hold that man-eating temper of yours. If you don't, we're lost."

Dawson, varsity coach of Bliss University, affectionately known and revered by two thousand undergraduates as "Skipper Bill" sat in the locker room with his arm around Ted Robertson's shoulders, star halfback and punter of the varsity eleven. Around them moved the other varsity players, substitutes, second string men, trainers and rubbers.

In the stands overhead every seat was taken, for these were the last few minutes before the big game of the year--the annual battle with Sloan College. On one side the sober blues and grays and blacks formed a background for huge yellow chrysanthemums and light blue ribbons, the Bliss colors, and the same background in the stands opposite set off the crimson of Sloan College.

The rival college bands of the two most important colored universities of the United States blared almost unheeded in the din, while agile cheerleaders clad in white from head to foot performed gymnastics in leading rolling volumes of cheers. All were in that tense, nerve-gripping mood prior to that game in which victory or defeat meant success or failure of the season's efforts of the teams of young giants that represented the two schools.

In the locker room, however, a different scene was being enacted. Every man was acting according to his own temperament and each in his own way attempted to hide the anxious thrill that every real football player feels before "the big game."

Jimmy Murray, quarterback and thrower of forward passes _par excellence_, nervously tied and untied his shoe laces a dozen times; "Tiny" Marshall, left tackle, who weighed two hundred and ten pounds, tried to whistle nonchalantly and failed miserably, while "Bull" Bascom, fullback, the only calm man in the room, was carefully adjusting his shoulder pads. Around them hovered the odor of arnica and liniment mixed with the familiar tang of perspiration which has dried in woolen jerseys--perspiration that marked many a long and wearisome hour of training and perfection of the machine that to-day received its final "exam."

Ted Robertson, the man around whom most of the team's offense was built, sat listening to Dawson's advice. Born with a fiery, almost unmanageable temper, his reckless, dauntless spirit had made him a terror to opposing teams. Strong was the line that could check his plunges, and fleet were the ends who could tackle him when once he got loose in an open field. Recognizing his phenomenal ability, both coach and players gave him the credit due him and consciously or unconsciously relied on him as the team's best player.

But to-day Sloan had declared that they were going to put Robertson out of the game and threats had been freely uttered that before the game had been going very long he "would be in the hospital." This news added to the tenseness of feeling. If Robertson should be put out of the game, or if he should lose his temper the chances of a victory for Bliss were slim indeed, for rarely had two teams been so evenly matched in skill and brain and brawn. Thus the final pleading of Dawson to Robertson to "hold that temper."

A roar of cheers greeted their ears as the red jerseyed Sloan team took the field. Led by Murray the Bliss players were likewise greeted by a storm of applause as they trotted out on the field and the varsity started through a brisk signal drill.

In a few minutes the referee called the rival captains to the center of the field. Sloan won the toss and elected to defend the south goal, kicking off with the wind behind its back. A breathless hush--the shrill whistle of the referee--the thump of cleated shoe against the ball and

the game was on.

The teams, wonderfully even in strength and in knowledge of the game, surged back and forth, the ball repeatedly changing hands as one team would hold the other for downs. From the kick-off, the Sloan players began their attempts to injure or anger Robertson. Vicious remarks were aimed at him while the referee was not near enough to hear.

When Robertson carried the ball and after he was downed under a mass of players, a fist would thud against his jaw or hard knuckles would be rubbed across his nose. Once when an opposing player had fallen across Robertson's right leg, another of his opponents seized his ankle and turned it. Though he fought against it, his temper was slowly but surely slipping away from him.

For three hectic quarters, with the tide of victory or defeat now surging towards Bliss--now towards Sloan, the battle raged. As play after play of brilliance or superbrilliance flashed forth, the stands alternately groaned or cheered, according to the sympathies of each. Robertson, a veritable stonewall of defense, time and again checked the rushes of the Sloan backs or threw himself recklessly at fleet backs on end runs when his own ends had failed to "get their man." On the offensive he repeatedly was called on to carry the ball and seldom did he fail to make the distance required.

A great weariness settled on Robertson and it was with difficulty that he was able to fight off a numbness and dizziness that almost overcame him. One thing sustained him. It was a bitter resentment against those who sought to hurt him. The fires within him had grown until they became a flaming, devastating thing that burned its way into his brain. It needed only a spark to make him forget the game, school, the coach and everything else. Yet even as he realized this he knew that if he did lose his temper, Bliss might as well concede the victory to Sloan. It was not conceit that caused him to know this and admit it but the clearness of vision that comes oft-times in a moment of greatest mental strain.

Finally, with the score still tied, neither side having scored, the time keeper warned the rival teams that only three minutes remained for play.

His warning served to cause a tightening of muscles and a grimness of countenance in a last final effort to put over a score and avert a tied score. The huge crowd prayed fervently for a score--a touchdown--a safety--a goal from field or placement--anything.

It was Sloan's ball on Bliss's forty-five-yard line. Only a fumble or some fluke could cause a score. Every player was on his mettle burning with anxiety to get his hands on that ball and scamper down the field to a touchdown and everlasting fame in the annals of his school's football history.

In a last desperate effort, the Bliss quarterback called a trick play. It started out like a quarterback run around left end. The Bliss left end ran straight down the field after delaying the man playing opposite him. When the Bliss quarter had made a wide run drawing in the Sloan secondary defense, he turned and like a flash shot a long forward pass over the heads of the incoming Sloan backfield to the end who had gone straight down the field and who was practically free of danger of being tackled by any of the Sloan backs.

Too late the Sloan players saw the ruse. Only Robertson was between the swift running end and a score. With grim satisfaction, his face streaked with perspiration, drawn and weary with the long hard struggle and the yeoman part he had played in it, Robertson saw that the man with the ball was the one player on the opposing side who had done most of the unfair playing in trying to put Robertson out of the game. All of the bitterness--all of the anger in his heart swelled up and he determined to overtake the end, prevent the score and tackle the man so viciously that he would be certain to break an arm or a leg. Robertson dug his cleats in the spongy turf with a phenomenal burst of speed, rapidly overtook his man, driving him meanwhile towards the sidelines.

At last the moment came. By making a flying tackle, which would be illegal but which he hoped the referee would not see, Robertson could get his man and get him in such fashion that he would have no chance of escaping injury. Robertson crouched for the spring. A fierce light came into his eyes. In a flash he saw the end whom he now hated with an intensity that wiped every thought from his mind except that of revenge, lying prone on the ground.

But even as he gloated over his revenge, the words of Bill Dawson came to him, "Hold that man-eating temper of yours." In a lightning-like conflict, the impulse to injure fought a desperate battle with the instinct of clean playing. His decision was made in a moment. Instead of making the vicious flying tackle, he ran all the faster, but the end was too swift and had too great a lead. Amid the frantically jubilant shouts of the Bliss rooters and the painful silence of the Sloan supporters the end went across the line for a touchdown just as time was up.

A gloom pervaded the dressing rooms of the Sloan team after the game. Robertson was in disgrace. Forgotten was the playing through most of the game. Forgotten were his desperate tackles that had saved the game more than once. Forgotten were the long runs and the hard line plunges that time and again had made first downs for his team. Only the fact that he had apparently failed in the last minute remained. Only Dawson and Robertson knew that it was not cowardice, that most detested of all things in athletics, in life itself, had caused Robertson to refuse to make that last dangerous, illegal flying tackle.

But in the heart of Robertson there was a strange peace. Being human, he naturally resented the discernible thoughts in the minds of his comrades of many a hard-fought battle. But a calmness made him forgetful of all this for he knew that at last, in a moment of the supreme test, he had conquered that which had been his master throughout all of his life--his temper. All the slurs and coldness in the world could not rob him of the satisfaction of this.



WONDERFUL-COW-THAT-NEVER-WAS!

Project Gutenberg's *Here and Now Story Book*, by Lucy Sprague Mitchell

Once there was a wonderful cow,--only she never was! She always had been wonderful, ever since she was a baby calf. Her mother noticed it at once. She was born out in the pasture one sunny morning in June. As soon as she was born, she got up on her long, thin legs. She wobbled quite a little for she wasn't very strong. Then she went over to her mother and put her nose down to her mother's bag and took a drink of milk. This is what all the old cow's babies had always done so the old cow thought nothing of that. But when this wonderful last baby calf had drunk its breakfast, what do you suppose it did? It stood on its head! Now the old cow had never seen anything like this. It was most surprising! It frightened her. She called to it:

"Oh, my baby, baby calf,
Your mother kindly begs,
Please, _please_ get off your head
And stand upon your legs!"

But the baby calf only mooed. And it smiled when it mooed which the old cow thought queer too. None of her other babies had smiled. Then the calf said:

"I'm a wonderful calf,
And it makes me laugh
Such wonderful things can I do!
I stand on my head
Whenever I'm fed,
And smile whenever I moo,
I do,
I smile whenever I moo!"

"Dear me!" thought the old mother cow. "I never saw or heard anything like this!"

But this was only the beginning. The baby calf kept on doing

strange and wonderful things till at last everyone called her
Wonderful-calf-that-never-was! And many people used to come to see her
stand on her head whenever she was fed. She did other queer things too!
Once she pulled off the ear of another calf! And all she said was: "Poor
little calf! You mustn't go in the pasture where there are other
calves!" But the little calf who had lost its ear said, "Yes, I must!"
But after that Wonderful-calf-that-never-was was kept in the barn for a
long time.

At last it was June again and she was a year old. Her horns had begun
to grow. The old cow, her mother, had another baby. This new baby calf
was just like other calves and not wonderful at all. The old cow was
glad for Wonderful-cow-that-never-was worried her very much. For
everything about her was queer. One day the calf who had lost
the ear,--she was a young cow now,--took hold of the tail of
Wonderful-young-cow-that-never-was and pulled it. And what do
you suppose happened? The tail broke right off! All the cows
were frightened. Whoever heard of a broken tail? But
Wonderful-young-cow-that-never-was only mooed and when she mooed
she always smiled. Then she said:

"I'm a wonderful cow
And I don't know how
Such wonderful things I do!
If I break my tail,
I never fail
To glue with a grasshopper's goo,
I do,
I glue with a grasshopper's goo!"

And so she did. She got a grasshopper to give her some sticky stuff
and she smeared it on the two ends of her broken tail and stuck them
together. "And now it's as good as new," she said, "and now it's as good
as new!"

Her horns grew and grew. She was very proud of them and was always
trying to hook some one or gore another cow with them. But one day she
went to the edge of the lake when it was very still. It wasn't wavy at
all. And as she leaned over to drink, she saw herself in the water. My

mercy! but she was shocked!

"My horns are straight!" she screamed, "and I want them curly!" She ran to the old mother cow and had what her mother called the "Krink-kranks." She jumped up and down and bellowed: "My horns are straight and I want them curly!"

The old mother cow was giving her new baby some milk. It made her cross to hear Wonderful-cow-that-never-was having krink-kranks over her horns. "Horns grow the way they grow!" she remarked crossly. "So what are you going to do about it?"

"Something!" answered the young cow. "I'm not Wonderful-cow-that-never-was for nothing!" And she stopped having krink-kranks and went off. She stayed away all day and when she did come back, her horns were curled up tight! And she was chewing and smiling and chewing and smiling.

"What have you done now?" gasped the old mother cow. "I never saw horns curled so crumply!"

The young cow smiled and said:

"I'm a wonderful cow
And I don't know how
Such wonderful things I do!
I curl my horn
On the cob of a corn
And smile whenever I chew,
I do,
I smile whenever I chew!"

"And here is the corn cob I curled them on," she said, opening her mouth. And sure enough, there was the corn cob!

Now Wonderful-cow-that-never-was got queerer and queerer until the farmer thought her a little _too_ queer. She was very proud of her crumpled horns and tried to hook everyone on them. Once she tore the farmer's coat trying to hook him. And once she _did_ toss him up. She

watched him in the air and all she said was "He's up now, but he'll come down some time." And bang! So he did!

Finally one terrible day, they tied her tight and cut off her horns. She was never the same afterwards. She couldn't hook any more. "I don't care about being queer any more," she said to her mother. And she wasn't. She stopped standing on her head. She never pulled off another ear. She never broke her tail again and of course she never curled her horns again. Because she hadn't any! "After all," she said, "it's wonderful enough just to be a cow and have four stomachs and chew cud and give milk and have a baby each Spring!" And that's what she's doing now!

She's a wonderful cow,
And anyhow
She does a wonderful thing!
She wallows in mud,
She chews her cud,
And has a baby in Spring!



X MEN OF HISTORY

Project Gutenberg's *The Nuttall Encyclopaedia*, by Edited by Rev. James Wood

XENOPHON, historian, philosopher, and military commander, born at Athens, son of an Athenian of good position; was a pupil and friend of Socrates; joined the expedition of Cyrus against his brother Artaxerxes, and on the failure of it conducted the ten thousand Greeks--"the Retreat of the Ten Thousand"--who went up with him back to the Bosphorus, served afterwards in several military adventures, brought himself under the ban of his fellow-citizens in Athens, and retired to Elis, where he spent 20 years of his life in the pursuits of country life and in the prosecution of literature; the principal of his literary works, which it appears have all come down to us, are the "Anabasis," being an account in seven books of the expedition of Cyrus and his own conduct of the retreat; the

"Memorabilia," in four books, being an account of the life and teaching and in defence of his master Socrates; the "Hellenica," in seven books, being an account of 49 years of Grecian history in continuation of Thucydides to the battle of Mantinea; and "Cyropædeia," in eight books, being an ideal account of the education of Cyrus the Elder. Xenophon wrote pure Greek in a plain, perspicuous, and unaffected style, had an eye to the practical in his estimate of things, and professed a sincere belief in a divine government of the world (435-354 B.C.).

XERXES, a king of Persia, son of Darius I., whom he succeeded on the throne in 485 B.C.; in his ambition to subdue Greece, which, after suppressing a revolt in Egypt, he in 481 essayed to do with an immense horde of men both by sea and land, he with his army crossed the Hellespont by means of a bridge of boats, was checked for a time at Thermopylæ by Leonidas and his five hundred, advanced to Athens to see his fleet destroyed at Salamis by Themistocles, fled at the sight by the way he came, and left Mardonius with 300,000 men to carry out his purpose, but, as it happened, to suffer defeat on the fatal field of Plataea in 479, and the utter annihilation of all his hopes; the rest of his life he spent in obscurity, and he was assassinated in 465 by Artabanus, the captain of his bodyguard, after a reign of 20 years.



THE YOUNG CUPBEARER

The Project Gutenberg EBook of *Fifty Famous People*, by James Baldwin

I

Long, long ago, there lived in Persia a little prince whose name was Cyrus. [Footnote: Cyrus (_pro_. si'rus).]

He was not petted and spoiled like many other princes. Although his father was a king, Cyrus was brought up like the son of a common man.

He knew how to work with his hands. He ate only the plainest food. He slept on a hard bed. He learned to endure hunger and cold.

When Cyrus was twelve years old he went with his mother to Media to visit his grandfather. His grandfather, whose name was Astyages, [Footnote: Astyages (_pro_ as ti'a jeez).] was king of Media, and very rich and powerful.

Cyrus was so tall and strong and handsome that his grandfather was very proud of him. He wished the lad to stay with him in Media. He therefore gave him many beautiful gifts and everything that could please a prince. One day King Astyages planned to make a great feast for the lad. The tables were to be laden with all kinds of food. There was to be music and dancing; and Cyrus was to invite as many guests as he chose. The hour for the feast came. Everything was ready. The servants were there, dressed in fine uniforms. The musicians and dancers were in their places. But no guests came.

"How is this, my dear boy?" asked the king. "The feast is ready, but no one has come to partake of it."

"That is because I have not invited any one," said Cyrus. "In Persia we do not have such feasts. If any one is hungry, he eats some bread and meat, with perhaps a few cresses, and that is the end of it. We never go to all this trouble and expense of making a fine dinner in order that our friends may eat what is not good for them."

King Astyages did not know whether to be pleased or displeased.

"Well," said he, "all these rich foods that were prepared for the feast are yours. What will you do with them?"

"I think I will give them to our friends," said Cyrus.

So he gave one portion to the king's officer who had taught him to ride. Another portion he gave to an old servant who waited upon his grandfather. And the rest he divided among the young women who took care of his mother.

II

The king's cupbearer, Sarcas, was very much offended because he was not given a share of the feast. The king also wondered why this man, who was his favorite, should be so slighted.

"Why didn't you give something to Sarcas?" he asked.

"Well, truly," said Cyrus, "I do not like him. He is proud and overbearing. He thinks that he makes a fine figure when he waits on you." "And so he does," said the king. "He is very skillful as a cupbearer." "That may be so," answered Cyrus, "but if you will let me be your cupbearer tomorrow, I think I can serve you quite as well."

King Astyages smiled. He saw that Cyrus had a will of his own, and this pleased him very much.

"I shall be glad to see what you can do," he said. "Tomorrow, you shall be the king's cupbearer."

III

You would hardly have known the young prince when the time came for him to appear before his grandfather. He was dressed in the rich uniform of the cupbearer, and he came forward with much dignity and grace.

He carried a white napkin upon his arm, and held the cup of wine very daintily with three of his fingers.

[Illustration]

His manners were perfect. Sarcas himself could not have served the king half so well.

"Bravo! bravo!" cried his mother, her eyes sparkling with pride.

"You have done well" said his grandfather. "But you neglected one important thing. It is the rule and custom of the cupbearer to pour out a little of the wine and taste it before handing the cup to me. This you forgot to do."

"Indeed, grandfather, I did not forget it," answered Cyrus.

"Then why didn't you do it?" asked his mother.

"Because I believed there was poison in the wine."

"Poison, my boy!" cried King Astyages, much alarmed. "Poison! poison!"

"Yes, grandfather, poison. For the other day, when you sat at dinner with your officers, I noticed that the wine made you act queerly. After the guests had drunk quite a little of it, they began to talk foolishly and sing loudly; and some of them went to sleep. And you, grandfather, were as bad as the rest. You forgot that you were king. You forgot all your good manners. You tried to dance and fell upon the floor. I am afraid to drink anything that makes men act in that way."

"Didn't you ever see your father behave so?" asked the king.

"No, never," said Cyrus. "He does not drink merely to be drinking. He drinks to quench his thirst, and that is all."

When Cyrus became a man, he succeeded his father as king of Persia; he also succeeded his grandfather Astyages as king of Media. He was a very wise and powerful ruler, and he made his country the greatest of any that was then known. In history he is commonly called Cyrus the Great.

ZEBU

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The zebu is an animal of the cow kind, and a native of India, and on that account is often called the Indian ox. There are many varieties of the zebu. Some of them are as large as our largest oxen. Others when full grown are no bigger than a small calf. Its horns are short and thick, and bent a little backwards; there is also a lump on the shoulder, which makes it look clumsy. It is a very useful and docile animal. In India it is used as a common beast of burden; it is also made to draw light wagons, and is even used for riding.

The Zebu is found not only in India, but in China, Eastern Africa, and the East India Islands. Figures representing the zebu are found on some of the most ancient monuments of that country. The Brahmins esteem the zebu a sacred animal; and for this reason it has received the name of the Brahmin ox.